IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF DELAWARE

POLAROID CORPORATION, Plaintiff and Counterclaim Defendant, v. HEWLETT-PACKARD COMPANY, Defendant and Counterclaim Plaintiff.	C.A. No. 06-738-SLR **REDACTED**

**DECLARATION OF RAYMOND N. SCOTT, JR.
IN SUPPORT OF DEFENDANT HEWLETT-PACKARD'S
MEMORANDUM IN OPPOSITION TO PLAINTIFF POLAROID CORPORATION'S
MOTION FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT OF INFRINGEMENT**

FISH & RICHARDSON P.C.
William J. Marsden, Jr. (#2247)
Raymond N. Scott, Jr. (#4949)
919 N. Market Street, Suite 1100
Wilmington, DE 19801
Tel.: (302) 652-5070
Fax: (302) 652-0607
Email: marsden@fr.com; rscott@fr.com

Robert S. Frank, Jr. *(pro hac vice)*
Carlos Perez-Albuerne *(pro hac vice)*
CHOATE, HALL & STEWART LLP
Two International Place
Boston, MA 02109
Tel.: (617) 248-5000
Fax: (617) 248-4000
Emails: rfrank@choate.com; cperez@choate.com

John E. Giust *(pro hac vice)*
Matthew E. Bernstein *(pro hac vice)*
MINTZ, LEVIN, COHN, FERRIS,
GLOVSKY AND POPEO PC
5355 Mira Sorrento Place, Suite 600
San Diego, CA 92121-3039
Tel.: (858) 320-3000
Fax: (858) 320-3001
Emails: jgiust@mintz.com; mbernstein@mintz.com

*Attorneys for Defendant and Counterclaim-Plaintiff
Hewlett-Packard Company*

Dated: June 5, 2008

I, Raymond N. Scott, Jr., declare as follows:

1. I am an attorney with Fish & Richardson P.C., counsel for Hewlett-Packard Company. I am a member of the Bar of the State of Delaware and of this Court. I have personal knowledge of the matters stated in this declaration and would testify truthfully to them if called upon to do so.

2. Attached hereto as Exhibit A is a true and correct copy of United States Patent No. 4,829,381.

3. Attached hereto as Exhibit B is a true and correct copy of the application that matured into U.S. Patent No. 4,829,381.

4. Attached hereto as Exhibit C is a true and correct copy of the October 17, 1988 Office Action issued by the United States Patent and Trademark Office during the prosecution of the application that matured into U.S. Patent No. 4,829,381.

5. Attached hereto as Exhibit D is a true and correct copy of United States Patent No. 4,489,349.

6. Attached hereto as Exhibit E is a true and correct copy of the December 8, 1988 Amendment to the application that matured into U.S. Patent No. 4,829,381.

7. Attached hereto as Exhibit F is a true and correct copy of the January 4, 1989 Notice of Allowability to the Amendment to the application that matured into U.S. Patent No. 4,829,381.

8. Attached hereto as Exhibit G is a true and correct copy of excerpts of the Deposition of Dr. Peggy Agouris.

9. Attached hereto as Exhibit H is a true and correct copy of excerpts of the Expert Report of Dr. Peggy Agouris Regarding U.S. Patent No. 4,829,381.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed this 5th of June, 2008, at Wilmington, Delaware.

/s/ Raymond N. Scott, Jr.
Raymond N. Scott, Jr.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on June 5, 2008, I electronically filed with the Clerk of Court the foregoing document using CM/ECF which will send electronic notification of such filing(s) to the following counsel:

Via Email
Jack B. Blumenfeld (#1014)
Julia Heaney (#3052)
Morris, Nichols, Arsht & Tunnell, LLP
1201 North Market Street
Wilmington, DE 19899-1347
Phone: 302-658-9200
Fax: 302-658-3989
Emails: jblumenfeld@mnat.com; jheaney@mnat.com

Attorneys for Plaintiff and Counterclaim-Defendant Polaroid Corporation

Via Email
Russell E. Levine, P.C.
Michelle W. Skinner/David W. Higer
Maria A. Meginnes/Courtney Holohan/C. Beasley
Kirkland & Ellis LLP
200 East Randolph Drive
Chicago, IL 60601
Phone: 312-861-2000
Fax: 312-861-2200
Emails: rlevine@kirkland.com; ggerst@kirkland.com; mskinner@kirkland.com; dhiger@kirkland.com; mmeginnes@kirkland.com; mmeginnes@kirkland.com; cbeasley@kirkland.com

Attorneys for Plaintiff and Counterclaim-Defendant Polaroid Corporation

Courtesy Copy Via Federal Express
Michelle W. Skinner
Kirkland & Ellis LLP
200 East Randolph Drive
Chicago, IL 60601
Phone: 312-861-2000
Fax: 312-861-2200

/s/ Raymond N. Scott, Jr.
Raymond N. Scott, Jr.

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EXHIBIT A

United States Patent [19]
Song et al.

[11] Patent Number: 4,829,381
[45] Date of Patent: May 9, 1989

[54] SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR ELECTRONIC IMAGE ENHANCEMENT BY DYNAMIC PIXEL TRANSFORMATION

[75] Inventors: Woo-Jin Song, Waltham; Donald S. Levinstone, Lexington, both of Mass.

[73] Assignee: Polaroid Corporation, Cambridge, Mass.

[21] Appl. No.: 182,987

[22] Filed: Apr. 18, 1988

[51] Int. Cl.[4] H04N 5/235; H04N 5/208
[52] U.S. Cl. 358/168; 358/166; 358/32; 358/164
[58] Field of Search 358/166, 167, 36, 37, 358/168, 169, 32, 164

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Primary Examiner—James J. Groody
Assistant Examiner—E. Anne Faris
Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Edward S. Roman

[57] ABSTRACT

A system and method are provided for continuously enhancing electronic image data received in a continuous stream of electronic information signals wherein the electronic information signal corresponding to each pixel of the image recorded is selectively transformed as a function of the average value of electronic information signals for a select plurality of pixel values in the immediate area of the pixel value being transformed. The electronic information signal transformations are provided on a pixel-by-pixel basis to increase contrast in localized areas that may be either exceptionally light or dark as a result of varying scene lighting conditions.

13 Claims, 2 Drawing Sheets

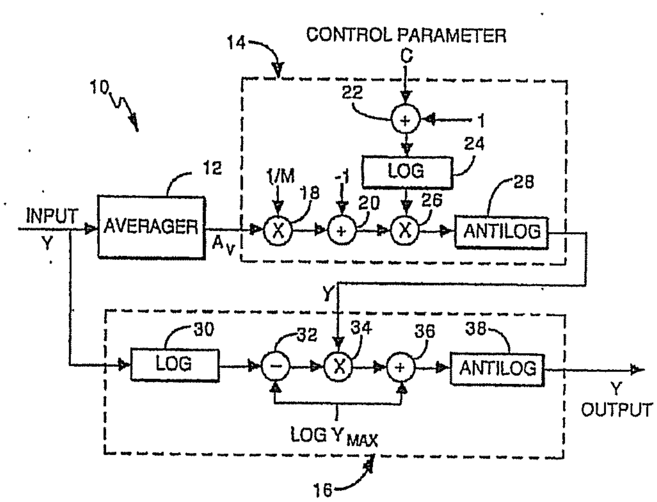
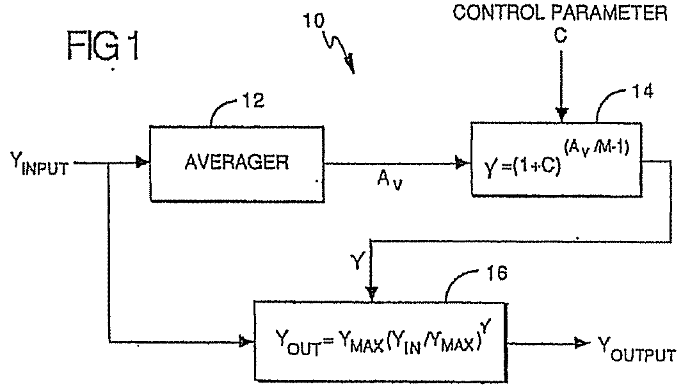


FIG 1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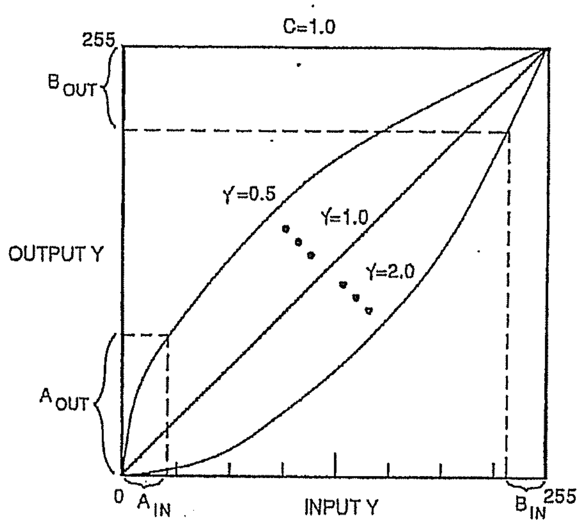
CONTROL PARAMETER
C
12
14
Y_{INPUT}
AVERAGER
A_V
$\gamma = (1+C)^{(A_V/M-1)}$
γ
16
$Y_{OUT} = Y_{MAX}(Y_{IN}/Y_{MAX})^{\gamma}$
Y_{OUTPUT}

FIG 2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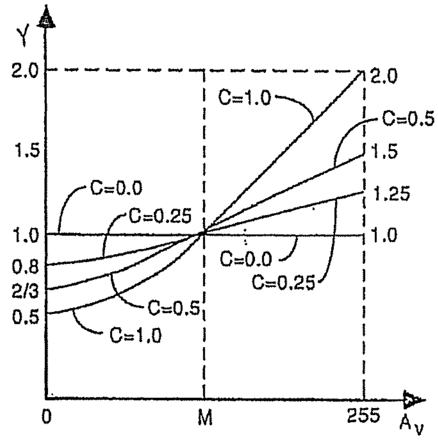
INPUT Y
B_{IN}
255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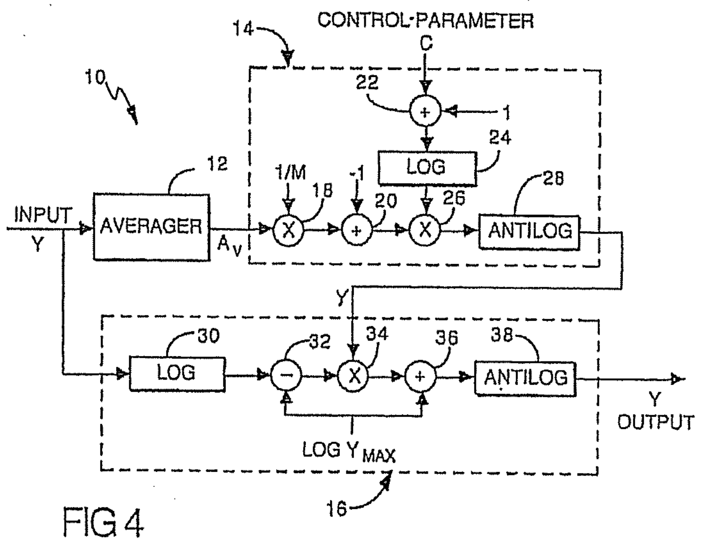
A_V

FIG 3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LOG
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18
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20
26
28
INPUT
Y
AVERAGER
A_V
ANTILOG
Y
30
32
34
36
38
LOG
ANTILOG
Y
OUTPUT
LOG Y_{MAX}
16

FIG 4

SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR ELECTRONIC IMAGE ENHANCEMENT BY DYNAMIC PIXEL TRANSFORMATION

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

This invention relates generally to a system and method for electronic image enhancement by dynamic pixel transformation and, more particularly, to a system and method for enhancing electronic image information by dynamically transforming electronic information signals on a pixel-to-pixel basis.

2. Description of the Prior Art

Electronic still image cameras are becoming well known in the art. Such cameras utilize photoresponsive arrays to sense scene light and convert the sensed scene light into electronic information signals. Electronic information signals are thereafter stored on a suitable media which may include magnetic, optical or solid state storage for subsequent retrieval and viewing. It may be desirable at some point to transform the stored image defining electronic information signals to a hard copy of the scene originally recorded. Photographic media have been suggested and used for such purposes. Difficulties arise, however, as a result of differences between the wide dynamic range of the scene originally sensed and recorded and the substantially smaller dynamic range to which a photographic print may be exposed. The wide dynamic range of luminance intensities within the scene originally recorded may thus be compressed or clipped to the substantially smaller dynamic range of the photographic print, losing detail within certain portions of the dynamic range that were otherwise visible in the original scene. Thus, it may be desirable to transform the original image defining electronic information signals in a nonlinear manner to selectively increase and/or decrease the contrast and brightness in certain portions of the scene such as those that might be brightly lit by sunlight or underlit as a result of shadows. However, no single transform function can be uniformly applied to all the image defining electronic information signals of the scene and achieve satisfying results because the lighting conditions vary across the scene.

Therefore, it is an object of this invention to provide a system and method of electronically enhancing images by dynamically increasing or decreasing contrast and brightness in selected portions of the scene that may be overlit or underlit.

It is a further object of this invention to provide a system and method of enhancing image defining electronic information signals in a dynamic manner on a pixel-by-pixel basis such that the value of each pixel is selectively transformed as a function of the average value of a plurality of pixels closely spaced about that pixel.

Other objects of the invention will be in part obvious and will in part appear hereinafter. The invention accordingly comprises a mechanism and system possessing the construction, combination of elements and arrangement of parts which are exemplified in the following detailed disclosure.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A system is provided for enhancing electronic image data received in a continuous stream of electronic information signals wherein each signal corresponds to one

of a plurality of succeeding pixels. The pixels collectively define the image to be recorded. Means are provided for averaging the electronic information signals corresponding to selected pluralities of pixels and providing an average electronic information signal for each of the plurality of the pixels so averaged. Means operate to thereafter select one of the plurality of different transfer functions of electronic information signals for each of the succeeding pixels. Each transfer function is selected as a function of the electronic information signal for one pixel and the average electronic information signal for the select plurality of pixels containing that one pixel. The electronic information signal corresponding to each pixel is subsequently transformed by the transfer function selected for that pixel. The system responds to an average electronic information signal indicative of low scene light intensity levels by transforming electronic information signals to provide a higher contrast and/or brightness to those electronic information signals corresponding to pixels having the lowest scene light intensity levels. The system also responds to an average electronic information signal indicative of high scene light intensity levels by transforming electronic information signals to provide a higher contrast and/or lower brightness to those electronic information signals corresponding to pixels having the highest scene light intensity levels.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The novel features that are considered characteristic of the invention are set forth with particularity in the appended claims. The invention itself, however, both as to its organization and its method of operation, together with other objects and advantages thereof will be best understood from the following description of the illustrated embodiment when read in connection with the accompanying drawings wherein:

FIG. 1 is a block diagram showing the system for enhancing electronic image data in the manner of this invention;

FIG. 2 is a graphical representation showing the output electronic information signals versus the input electronic information signals;

FIG. 3 is a graphical representation showing the variation of gamma γ with different selected control parameters; and

FIG. 4 is a block diagram showing in substantially more detail a system for enhancing electronic image data of this invention in the manner of FIG. 1.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

In electronic image processing it is desirable to adjust the image contrast automatically to produce more detail in both the bright and dark areas of a scene that is recorded. The image enhancing system and method of this invention operates to both lighten the dark regions of a scene and darken the light regions of a scene by enhancing contrast to improve the detail visibility that would otherwise be lost when the electronic image signals are converted to a hard copy reproduction. Toward that end, the system and method of this invention operates to continuously enhance electronic image data received in a continuous stream of electronic information signals, each signal of which corresponds to one of the plurality of succeeding pixels which collectively define the recorded image.

Referring now to FIG. 1, there is shown a block diagram for the system of this invention in which a continuous stream of electronic information signals each corresponding to one of a plurality of succeeding pixels from the recorded image are received at terminal Y_{Input}. The electronic information signals input at terminal Y_{Input} may be derived in a well-known manner by a two-dimensional photosensitive array or sensor (not shown) which may comprise a high resolution charge coupled device (CCD) or charge injection device (CID). The sensor receives image scene light in any well-known manner by way of an objective lens and shutter (also not shown). The image sensing array comprises a plurality of image sensing elements or pixels preferably arranged in a two-dimensional area array wherein each image sensing pixel converts the incident image defining scene light rays into a corresponding analog electronic information signal value. Preferably, the image sensing pixels are arranged in columns and rows as is well known in the art. As will be readily understood, image sensing arrays, particularly for sensing still images, preferably comprise a large number of image sensing elements or pixels in the order of 500,000 or greater.

The two-dimensional photosensitive arrays may also be overlayed with any one of a variety of different well-known filter patterns so that each pixel provides an electronic information signal value corresponding to a particular color. For instance, the columns of the two-dimensional photosensitive array may be overlayed with any one of a red, green or blue filter stripe arranged in a repeating fashion across the face thereof. The electronic information signal value for each pixel in this arrangement thus corresponds to a particular color.

The electronic information signal values retrieved from the photosensitive array in this manner are preferably converted to luminance (Y) and chrominance, e.g., (R-Y and B-Y) signal values. For the case where the two-dimensional photosensitive array is overlayed with red, green and blue filters, the luminance electronic information signals are preferably determined by the following relationship: $Y=0.30R+0.59G+0.11B$ as is well known in the television art. The analog luminance electronic information signal values for each pixel element of the photosensitive array for the example herein described are digitized to an 8-bit binary number so as to have a dynamic integer range of from 0 - 255 within which range are 256 intensity levels and a maximum luminance value of $Y_{MAX}=255$. The electronic image detection and processing herein described so far will be recognized as being conventional and well known in the art.

The image defining electronic information signals derived in the above-described manner and preferably comprising digitized luminance signals are thereafter subjected to a gain control function which may be automatic as is well known in the art before being directed to input terminal Y_{input} of the block diagram of FIG. 1. The image defining luminance electronic information signals are thereafter averaged for selected pluralities of pixels by an averager 12. The averager 12 may comprise a low pass filter as is well known in the art which operates to provide an average value electronic information signal Av corresponding to the average luminance values for a selected window or plurality of pixels that continuously changes in correspondence with each succeeding pixel value to be enhanced. Alternatively, the averager may comprise a block average in which a selected group or block of pixel values is averaged to provide one average value electronic information signal Av in correspondence with each pixel value of that group to be enhanced. Succeeding groups of pixel values are thereafter averaged. In the preferred mode, the selected groups of pixels are preferably selected in two dimensions from the photosensitive array.

Both low pass filtering and block averaging require a buffer memory to hold the selected groupings of pixel values for averaging as is well known in the art. The low pass filter method results in a continuing change in the average value of the electronic information signal Av for each succeeding pixel thereby providing a more accurate determination of average values for selecting the appropriate transfer function in the manner of this invention to be described. However, as will be well understood, the low pass filtering technique requires a substantially increased computational capacity in comparison to block averaging; and, therefore, block averaging, although not as highly selective as low pass filtering, may be preferred in image enhancing applications where reduced computational capacity is desired. Low pass filtering and block averaging are both well-known techniques in the electronic arts and therefore need not be described in any further detail herein.

The average value for the image defining luminance electronic information signal (Av) is thereafter provided to a gamma determining circuit 14 which determines gamma as a function of the average value input thereto in accordance with the following relationship:

$$\gamma=(1+C)(Av/M-1)$$

In the above relationship M for this example is selected to be the center value of the dynamic range of the electronic information signals. As was previously stated, the electronic signal values for this example comprise 8-bit binary numbers having a dynamic range of 256. Thus, for this example, $M=128$. However, it will be readily understood that M may be selected to be any value within the dynamic range of the electronic information signals depending upon where the least image enhancement is desired. Thus, for the case where M is selected to be at the center of the dynamic range, image enhancement will have the greatest effect near the ends of the dynamic range and the least effect toward the center of the dynamic range. Selecting the value of M to be closer to the high end of the dynamic range will decrease the effective image enhancement provided at that end by the system and method of this invention.

C is a control parameter selected in the manner of this invention to vary the amount of image enhancement that may be provided by the system and method of this invention in a manner to be more fully described in the following discussion.

The value of gamma is thereafter directed to a transfer function imposing circuit 16 which operates to impose the following transfer function on the image defining luminance electronic information signals (Y) received at input terminal Y_{input} and corresponding to each one of the succeeding pixels which collectively define the recorded image.

$$Y_{out}=Y_{MAX}(Y_{in}/Y_{MAX})^{\gamma}$$

Y_{MAX} equals the highest value of the dynamic range for the electronic information signals or 255 for the example herein described. Y_{out} equals the image defining

luminance electronic information signal transformed in the manner of this invention to provide an enhanced image. As is now readily apparent, it is selected for the image defining luminance electronic information signal for each pixel as a function of a local average of image defining luminance electronic information signals for a select group or plurality of pixels closely spaced about the pixel value being enhanced or transformed. Thus, gamma γ changes continuously in correspondence with the average values from the continuous stream of succeeding image defining luminance electronic information signals so that each image defining luminance electronic information signal is enhanced or transformed by a selected one of a plurality of different transfer functions.

Referring now to FIG. 2, there is shown a graphical representation of the various transfer functions that are imposed by the transfer function circuit 16 as a function of the variation in gamma γ. For the example as shown in FIG. 2, the control parameter C is selected to equal 1 and thus it can be seen that gamma γ has a variation of from 0.5 to 2. For instance, in the situation where the average value of the image defining luminance electronic signals is high and approaches the maximum value of the dynamic range which in this example equals 255 and is indicative of a portion of the image that is extremely bright, it can be seen that gamma γ equals 1+C or as in the case where C=1, gamma $\gamma=2$ as shown in the diagram of FIG. 2. The slope of the transfer function as is readily apparent for the situation where gamma $\gamma=2$ becomes quite steep at the high end of the dynamic range (B_{in}, B_{out}) thereby providing a higher contrast to those image defining luminance electronic information signals corresponding to pixels having the highest scene light intensity levels. The slope of the transfer function for $\gamma=2$ decreases significantly at the low end of the dynamic range (A_{in}, A_{out}) thereby providing a lower contrast to those image defining luminance electronic information signals corresponding to pixels having the lowest scene light intensity levels. Since M is selected to be at the center of the dynamic range, it can be seen that the slope of the transfer function at the center of the dynamic range most closely approximates that of a straight line thereby providing the least effect on the output signal for pixels having intensity levels near the center of the dynamic range.

Conversely, in the situation where the average values of the image defining luminance electronic information signals are low approaching 0 indicative of localized areas of low scene light intensity levels, then gamma $\gamma=1$ divided by 1+C which equals 0.5 in the case where C=1. The transfer function imposed by the transfer function circuit 16 in the case where gamma γ equals 0.5 is shown graphically in FIG. 2 as comprising a substantially steep slope in the areas (A_{in}, A_{out}) where the image defining luminance electronic information signal values are low. Thus, the transfer function in this case where gamma γ equals 0.5 operates to transform the image defining luminance electronic information signals to provide a high contrast to those electronic information signals corresponding to pixels having the lowest scene light intensity levels. The slope of the transfer function for $\gamma=0.5$ decreases significantly at the high end of the dynamic range (B_{in}, B_{out}) thereby providing a lower contrast to those image defining luminance electronic information signals corresponding to pixels having the highest scene light intensity levels. Again, since M is selected to be at the center of the dynamic range, it can be seen that the slope of the transfer function at the center of the dynamic range most closely approximates that of a straight line thereby providing the least effect on the output signal for pixels having intensity levels near the center of the dynamic range. It can be seen that the transfer function imposed by the transfer function circuit 16 can have any intermediate number of transfer functions shown between the extreme end transfer functions where gamma equals 0.5 or 2.0 and that all of the transfer functions are operative for the full extent of the input dynamic range so as not to clip the input signal values.

In the situation where the average value for the image defining luminance electronic information signal values corresponds to the intermediate value of the dynamic range, gamma $\gamma=1$ and the transfer function becomes a straight line to provide a one-to-one relationship between the input and output electronic information signals with no localized increase in contrast as provided by the other transfer functions where gamma γ is either greater or less than 1. Thus, in this manner in a situation where a scene may have localized dark or bright areas, there may be provided a localized increase in the contrast to those areas to make visible details that otherwise would be lost. The transfer functions vary in correspondence with the variation in the local average scene light intensity levels so as to apply the increased contrast selectively to those light or dark portions of the scene where details are otherwise obscured.

Referring now to FIG. 3, there is shown a graphical representation of the variation in gamma γ as a function of the variation of the control parameter C. Thus, it can be seen that for a control parameter C value of 1 gamma γ varies from 0.5 to 2. If the control parameter C is selected to be 0, gamma γ remains constant at 1. Although for a typical imaging application which requires dynamic range compression, it may be satisfactory to select the control parameter C to equal 1 thereby achieving an extreme variation in gamma from 2 to 0.5, it may be desirable to increase the amount of localized contrast thereby selecting values of the control parameter C greater than 1.

Referring now to FIG. 4 where like numerals reference previously discussed components, there is shown a circuit diagram for implementing a transfer function as described in connection with FIG. 1. The aforementioned transfer function may be converted to the following relationship by taking the logarithm on both sides of the aforementioned equation.

$$\log Y_{out} = \log Y_{MAX} + \gamma(\log Y_{in} - \log Y_{MAX})$$

Similarly, the relationship for determining gamma can also be rewritten as follows:

$$\log \gamma = (Av/M - 1)[\log(1+C)]$$

These relationships can be implemented as shown by the circuit of FIG. 4. The average value of the image defining luminance electronic information signal is first directed to a multiplier circuit 18 where the signal is multiplied by 1/M where M equals one-half the dynamic range of the electronic information signals as previously discussed. The output from the multiplier circuit 18, in turn, is directed to a combining circuit 20 which operates to add a negative 1 to the output from the multiplier circuit 18. The control parameter C is directed to a combiner circuit 22 which operates to add

a positive 1 thereto. The output from the combiner circuit 22, in turn, is directed to a log circuit 24 which provides the logarithmic value for the C+1 input thereto. The output from the logarithmic circuit 24, in turn, is multiplied by the output from the combining circuit 20 by a multiplier circuit 26. The output from the multiplier circuit 26, in turn, is directed to an antilogarithmic determining circuit 28 which operates utilizing a lookup table to provide the antilogarithm creating the value of gamma γ.

The image defining luminance electronic information signal for each pixel, in turn, is directed to a logarithm determining circuit 30 in the transfer function circuit 16. The output from the logarithm determining circuit 30, in turn, is directed to a combiner circuit 32 which operates to subtract therefrom the logarithm for the maximum dynamic range of the electronic information signals. The output from the combiner 32, in turn, is multiplied by multiplier circuit 34 by the value of gamma γ received from the antilogarithm determining circuit 28. The output from the multiplier 34, in turn, is directed to a combiner circuit 36 for addition to the logarithm of the maximum dynamic range of the electronic information signals. The output from the combiner circuit 36, in turn, is directed to an antilogarithm determining circuit 38 to provide the transformed image defining luminance electronic information signals Y_{out} as shown. Thus, in this manner, gamma γ is determined continuously in accordance with the relationship as shown by the block diagram of FIG. 1 in a simple and convenient manner utilizing multiplication circuits, combining circuits, logarithm determining circuits, and antilogarithm determining circuits as shown in FIG. 4. In like manner, the transfer function continuously varied in accordance with the selection of gamma may also be imposed continuously in a simple and convenient manner by circuitry comprising a logarithm determining circuit, combining circuits, multiplication circuit, and an antilogarithm determining circuit. Thus, in this manner localized dynamic contrast enhancement can be provided as a function of dynamic gamma transformation on a pixel-by-pixel basis.

Thus, the system and method of this invention provides for enhancing electronic image data in a manner involving a relatively small number of computations that can be easily calculated in a continuous manner. All of the transfer functions that can be invoked are of a continuous nature without any sharp discontinuities that could otherwise result in undesirable artifacts appearing in the final image. In addition, as previously mentioned, none of the transfer functions operate to clip any portion of the incoming electronic information signal, thus resulting in the entire dynamic range of the incoming signal being transformed.

Other embodiments of the invention including additions, subtractions, deletions and other modifications of the preferred disclosed embodiments of the invention will be obvious to those skilled in the art and are within the scope of the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A system for continuously enhancing electronic image data received in a continuous stream of electronic information signals, each signal having a value within a determinate dynamic range of values and corresponding to one of a plurality of succeeding pixels which collectively define an image, said system comprising:

means for averaging electronic information signals corresponding to selected pluralities of pixels and providing an average electronic information signal for each said plurality of pixels so averaged; and

means for selecting one of a plurality of different transfer functions for the electronic information signal for each of the succeeding pixels in a manner whereby each transfer function is selected as a function of the electronic information signal for one pixel and the average electronic information signal for the select plurality of pixels containing said one pixel and for subsequently transforming the electronic information signal corresponding to each pixel by the transfer function selected for that pixel wherein said selecting and transforming means further operates to select said transfer function as a function of the ratio of the value of the average electronic information signal to the dynamic range of the electronic information signals such that the ratio increases in correspondence with the increase in the value of the average electronic information signal.

2. The system of claim 1 wherein said selecting and transforming means is responsive to an average electronic information signal indicative of low scene light intensity levels for transforming the electronic information signals to provide a higher contrast to those electronic information signals corresponding to pixels having the lowest scene light intensity levels and is further responsive to an average electronic information signal indicative of high scene light intensity levels for transforming the electronic information signals to provide a higher contrast to those electronic information signals corresponding to pixels having the highest scene light intensity levels.

3. The system of claim 2 wherein said selecting and transforming means further operates to select said transfer function as a function of a determined constant whose value corresponds to the amount of contrast provided in those areas of higher contrast provided by said select transfer function.

4. The system of claim 3 wherein said selecting and transforming means further operates to determine the select transfer function as a function of the determination of gamma (γ), said selecting and transforming means including means for determining gamma (γ) in accordance with the relationship

$$\gamma=(1+C)(Av/M-1)$$

where C equals said determined constant, Av equals the average electronic information signal value and M equals a select proportionate value of the dynamic range of the electronic information signals.

5. The system of claim 4 wherein said transforming means transforms the electronic information signal of each pixel in accordance with the relationship

$$Y_{out}=Y_{MAX}(Y_{in}/Y_{MAX})^{\gamma}$$

where Y_{in} equals the value of the electronic information signal of the pixel to be enhanced, Y_{out} equals the enhanced value of the input electronic information signal and Y_{MAX} equals the highest value of the dynamic range for the electronic information signals.

6. A system for enhancing electronic image data received in a continuous stream of electronic information signals each signal having a value within a determinate dynamic range of values and corresponding to one of a

plurality of succeeding pixels which collectively define an image, said system comprising:

means for averaging electronic information signals corresponding to selected pluralities of pixels and providing an average electronic information signal for each said plurality of pixels so averaged;

means for dividing each of the average electronic information signals corresponding to each pixel by a value M corresponding to a select proportionate value of the dynamic range of said electronic information signals;

first means for subtracting 1 from each of the electronic information signals output by said dividing means;

first means for adding a select control parameter and 1;

first means for determining the logarithm of the output from said first adding means;

first means for multiplying the output from said first logarithm determining means by the output from said first subtracting means;

first means for determining the antilogarithm of the output from said first multiplying means;

second means for determining the logarithm for each of the continuous streams of electronic information signals;

second means for subtracting the logarithm for a value corresponding to the maximum value of the electronic information signals from the output of said second logarithm determining means;

second means for multiplying the output of said first antilogarithm determining means by the output from said second subtracting means;

second means for adding the logarithm of the value corresponding to the maximum value of the electronic information signals to the output from said second multiplying means; and

second means for determining the antilogarithm of the output from said second adding means to provide an enhanced output signal value.

7. A method for continuously enhancing electronic image data received in a continuous stream of electronic information signals each signal having a value within a determinate dynamic range of values and corresponding to one of a plurality of succeeding pixels which collectively define an image, said method comprising the steps of:

averaging the electronic information signals corresponding to selected pluralities of pixels and providing an average electronic information signal for each said plurality of pixels;

selecting one of a plurality of different transfer functions for the electronic information signal for each of the plurality of succeeding pixels in a manner whereby each transfer function is selected as a function of the electronic information signal for one pixel and the average electronic information signal for the select plurality of pixels containing said one pixel; and

transforming the electronic information signal corresponding to each pixel by the transfer function selected for that pixel wherein said transfer function is selected further as a function of the ratio of the value of the average electronic information signal to a select proportionate value of the dynamic range of the electronic information signals such that the ratio increases in correspondence with the increase in the value of the average electronic information signal.

8. The method claim 7 wherein the transfer function is selected: in response to an average electronic information signal indicative of low scene light intensity levels to provide a higher contrast to those electronic information signals corresponding to pixels having the lowest scene light intensity levels and in response to an average electronic information signal indicative of high scene light intensity levels to provide a higher contrast to those electronic information signals corresponding to pixels having the highest scene light intensity levels.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein said transfer function is selected further as a function of a determined constant wherein increasing the value of said constant operates to increase the contrast in those areas of higher contrast provided by said select transfer function.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein said transfer function is selected as a function of the determination of gamma (γ) and gamma (γ) is determined for each pixel in accordance with the relationship

$$\gamma=(1+C)(Av/M-1)$$

where C equals said determined constant, Av equals the average electronic information signal value and M equals said value for one-half the dynamic range of the electronic information signals.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein said select transfer function for the electronic information signal of each pixel comprises the relationship

$$Y_{out}=Y_{MAX}(Y_{in}/Y_{MAX})\gamma$$

where Y_{in} equals the value of the electronic information signal of the pixel to be enhanced, Y_{out} equals the enhanced value of the input electronic information signal and Y_{MAX} equals the highest value of the dynamic range for the electronic information signals.

12. A method for enhancing electronic image data received in a continuous stream of electronic information signals each signal corresponding to one of a plurality of succeeding pixels which collectively define an image, said method comprising the steps of:

averaging the electronic information signals corresponding to selected pluralities of pixels and providing an average electronic information signal for each said plurality of pixels;

dividing each of the average electronic information signals corresponding to each pixel by a value M corresponding to a select proportionate value of the dynamic range of said electronic information signals;

subtracting 1 from each of the electronic information signals previously divided by the value M to provide a first intermediate signal value;

selecting a control parameter C as a function of the amount of image enhancement to be applied;

adding 1 to the control parameter C;

determining the logarithm of the control parameter C plus 1;

multiplying the logarithm of the control parameter C plus 1 by said first intermediate signal value to provide a second intermediate signal value;

determining the antilogarithm of the second intermediate signal value;

determining the logarithm for each of the continuous streams of electronic information signals;

subtracting from the previously determined logarithm for each of the continuous streams of electronic information signals the logarithm for a value corresponding to the maximum value of the electronic information signals to provide a third intermediate signal value;

multiplying the antilogarithm of the second intermediate signal value by the third intermediate signal value to provide a fourth intermediate signal value;

adding the logarithm of the value corresponding to the maximum value of the electronic information signals to the fourth intermediate signal value to provide a fifth intermediate signal value; and

determining the antilogarithm of the fifth intermediate signal value to provide an enhanced output signal value.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein said image enhancement operates to increase image contrast locally in areas of pixels having low contrast and said control parameter C is determined as a function of the amount of local contrast variation to be provided.

* * * * *

EXHIBIT B

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Hon. Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Washington, D. C. 20231

Sir:

Enclosed herewith are the petition, specification, claims, declaration, drawings, assignment and information disclosure statement in connection with an application of Woo-Jin Song and Donald S. Levinstone

for a patent for A SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR ELECTRONIC IMAGE ENHANCEMENT BY DYNAMIC PIXEL TRANSFORMATION.

There is also enclosed a check to cover the cost of filing the application and recording the assignment, as follows:

Basic Fee ----------------------------------	$340.00
Additional Fees:	
Total number of claims in excess of 20, times $12 ------------------------------	0.00
Number of independent claims minus 3, times $34 ------------------------------	34.00
Total Filing Fee ---------------------------	$374.00
Assignment Recording Fee ------------------	7.00
Total Enclosed ---------------------------	$381.00

It is respectfully requested that the Deposit Account of Polaroid Corporation (Account No. 16-2195) be credited with any excess filing fee or charged for any deficiency in filing fee.

Please address all communications from the Patent Office in connection with this application to Polaroid Corporation, Patent Department, 549 Technology Square, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139.

Respectfully,

CHECK NO. 16597 ENCLOSED
IN AMOUNT OF $381.00

Edward S. Roman
Edward S. Roman
Registration No. 25,778

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Enclosures

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Title: A SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR ELECTRONIC IMAGE ENHANCEMENT BY DYNAMIC PIXEL TRANSFORMATION

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

This invention relates generally to a system and method for electronic image enhancement by dynamic pixel transformation and, more particularly, to a system and method for enhancing electronic image information by dynamically transforming electronic information signals on a pixel-to-pixel basis.

2. Description of the Prior Art

Electronic still image cameras are becoming well known in the art. Such cameras utilize photoresponsive arrays to sense scene light and convert the sensed scene light into electronic information signals. Electronic information signals are thereafter stored on a suitable media which may include magnetic, optical or solid state storage for subsequent retrieval and viewing. It may be desirable at some point to transform the stored image defining electronic information signals to a hard copy of the scene originally recorded. Photographic media have been suggested and used for such purposes. Difficulties arise, however, as a result of differences between the wide dynamic range of the scene originally sensed and recorded and the substantially smaller dynamic range to which a photographic print may be exposed. The wide dynamic range of luminance intensities within the scene originally recorded may thus be compressed or clipped to

the substantially smaller dynamic range of the photographic print, losing detail within certain portions of the dynamic range that were otherwise visible in the original scene. Thus, it may be desirable to transform the original image defining electronic information signals in a nonlinear manner to selectively increase and/or decrease the contrast and brightness in certain portions of the scene such as those that might be brightly lit by sunlight or underlit as a result of shadows. However, no single transform function can be uniformly applied to all the image defining electronic information ~~singals~~ signals of the scene and achieve satisfying results because the lighting conditions vary across the scene.

Therefore, it is an object of this invention to provide a system and method of electronically enhancing images by dynamically increasing or decreasing contrast and brightness in selected portions of the scene that may be overlit or underlit.

It is a further object of this invention to provide a system and method of enhancing image defining electronic information signals in a dynamic manner on a pixel-by-pixel basis such that the value of each pixel is selectively transformed as a function of the average value of a plurality of pixels closely spaced about that pixel.

Other objects of the invention will be in part obvious and will in part appear hereinafter. The invention accordingly comprises a mechanism and system possessing the construction, combination of elements and arrangement of parts which are exemplified in the following detailed disclosure.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A system is provided for enhancing electronic image data received in a continuous stream of electronic information signals wherein each signal corresponds to one of a plurality of succeeding pixels. The pixels col-

lectively define the image to be recorded. Means are provided for averaging the electronic information signals corresponding to selected pluralities of pixels and providing an average electronic information signal for each of the plurality of the pixels so averaged. Means operate to thereafter select one of the plurality of different transfer functions of electronic information signals for each of the succeeding pixels. Each transfer function is selected as a function of the electronic information signal for one pixel and the average electronic information signal for the select plurality of pixels containing that one pixel. The electronic information signal corresponding to each pixel is subsequently transformed by the transfer function selected for that pixel. The system responds to an average electronic information signal indicative of low scene light intensity levels by transforming electronic information signals to provide a higher contrast and/or brightness to those electronic information signals corresponding to pixels having the lowest scene light intensity levels. The system also responds to an average electronic information signal indicative of high scene light intensity levels by transforming electronic information signals to provide a higher contrast and/or lower brightness to those electronic information signals corresponding to pixels having the highest scene light intensity levels.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The novel features that are considered characteristic of the invention are set forth with particularity in the appended claims. The invention itself, however, both as to its organization and its method of operation, together with other objects and advantages thereof will be best understood from the following description of the illustrated embodiment when read in connection with the accompanying drawings wherein:

FIG. 1 is a block diagram showing the system for enhancing electronic image data in the manner of this invention;

FIG. 2 is a graphical representation showing the output electronic information signals versus the input electronic information signals;

FIG. 3 is a graphical representation showing the variation of gamma γ with different selected control parameters; and

FIG. 4 is a block diagram showing in substantially more detail a system for enhancing electronic image data of this invention in the manner of FIG. 1.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

In electronic image processing it is desirable to adjust the image contrast automatically to produce more detail in both the bright and dark areas of a scene that is recorded. The image enhancing system and method of this invention operates to both lighten the dark regions of a scene and darken the light regions of a scene by enhancing contrast to improve the detail visibility that would otherwise be lost when the electronic image signals are converted to a hard copy reproduction. Toward that end, the system and method of this invention operates to continuously enhance electronic image data received in a continuous stream of electronic information signals, each signal of which corresponds to one of the plurality of succeeding pixels which collectively define the recorded image.

Referring now to FIG. 1, there is shown a block diagram for the system of this invention in which a continuous stream of electronic information signals each corresponding to one of a plurality of succeeding pixels from the recorded image are received at terminal Y_{input}. The electronic information signals input at terminal Y_{input} may be derived in a well-known manner by

a two-dimensional photosensitive array or sensor (not shown) which may comprise a high resolution charge coupled device (CCD) or charge injection device (CID). The sensor receives image scene light in any well-known manner by way of an objective lens and shutter (also not shown). The image sensing array comprises a plurality of image sensing elements or pixels preferably arranged in a two-dimensional area array wherein each image sensing pixel converts the incident image defining scene light rays into a corresponding analog electronic information signal value. Preferably, the image sensing pixels are arranged in columns and rows as is well known in the art. As will be readily understood, image sensing arrays, particularly for sensing still images, preferably comprise a large number of image sensing elements or pixels in the order of 500,000 or greater.

The two-dimensional photosensitive arrays may also be overlayed with any one of a variety of different well-known filter patterns so that each pixel provides an electronic information signal value corresponding to a particular color. For instance, the columns of the two-dimensional photosensitive array may be overlayed with any one of a red, green or blue filter stripe arranged in a repeating fashion across the face thereof. The electronic information signal value for each pixel in this arrangement thus corresponds to a particular color.

The electronic information signal values retrieved from the photosensitive array in this manner are preferably converted to luminance (Y) and chrominance, e.g., (R-Y and B-Y) signal values. For the case where the two-dimensional photosensitive array is overlayed with red, green and blue filters, the luminance electronic information signals are preferably determined by the following relationship: $Y = 0.30R + 0.59G + 0.11B$ as is well known in the television art. The analog luminance

electronic information signal values for each pixel element of the photosensitive array for the example herein described are digitized to an 8-bit binary number so as to have a dynamic integer range of from 0 - 255 within which range are 256 intensity levels and a maximum luminance value of Y_{MAX} = 255. The electronic image detection and processing herein described so far will be recognized as being conventional and well known in the art.

The image defining electronic information signals derived in the above-described manner and preferably comprising digitized luminance signals are thereafter subjected to a gain control function which may be automatic as is well known in the art before being directed to input terminal Y_{input} of the block diagram of FIG. 1. The image defining luminance electronic information signals are thereafter averaged for selected pluralities of pixels by an averager 12. The averager 12 may comprise a low pass filter as is well known in the art which operates to provide an average value electronic information signal Av corresponding to the average luminance values for a selected window or plurality of pixels that continuously changes in correspondence with each succeeding pixel value to be enhanced. Alternatively, the averager may comprise a block average in which a selected group or block of pixel values is averaged to provide one average value electronic information signal Av in correspondence with each pixel value of that group to be enhanced. Succeeding groups of pixel values are thereafter averaged. In the preferred mode, the selected groups of pixels are preferably selected in two dimensions from the photosensitive array.

Both low pass filtering and block averaging require a buffer memory to hold the selected groupings of pixel values for averaging as is well known in the art. The low pass filter method results in a continuing change

in the average value of the electronic information signal Av for each succeeding pixel thereby providing a more accurate determination of average values for selecting the appropriate transfer function in the manner of this invention to be described. However, as will be well understood, the low pass filtering technique requires a substantially increased computational capacity in comparison to block averaging; and, therefore, block averaging, although not as highly selective as low pass filtering, may be preferred in image enhancing applications where reduced computational capacity is desired. Low pass filtering and block averaging are both well-known techniques in the electronic arts and therefor need not be described in any further detail herein.

The average value for the image defining luminance electronic information signal (Av) is thereafter provided to a gamma determining circuit 14 which determines gamma as a function of the average value input thereto in accordance with the following relationship:

$$\gamma = (1 + C)^{(Av/M-1)}$$

In the above relationship M for this example is selected to be the center value of the dynamic range of the electronic information signals. As was previously stated, the electronic signal values for this example comprise 8-bit binary numbers having a dynamic range of 256. Thus, for this example, M = 128. However, it will be readily understood that M may be selected to be any value within the dynamic range of the electronic information signals depending upon where the least image enhancement is desired. Thus, for the case where M is selected to be at the center of the dynamic range, image enhancement will have the greatest effect near the ends of the dynamic range and the least effect toward the center of the dynamic range. Selecting the value of M to be closer to the high end of the dynamic range will decrease the

effective image enhancement provided at that end by the system and method of this invention.

C is a control parameter selected in the manner of this invention to vary the amount of image enhancement that may be provided by the system and method of this invention in a manner to be more fully described in the following discussion.

The value of gamma is thereafter directed to a transfer function imposing circuit 16 which operates to impose the following transfer function on the image defining luminance electronic information signals (Y) received at input terminal Y_{input} and corresponding to each one of the succeeding pixels which collectively define the recorded image.

$$Y_{out} = Y_{MAX}(Y_{in}/Y_{MAX})^{\gamma}$$

Y_{MAX} equals the highest value of the dynamic range for the electronic information signals or 255 for the example herein described. Y_{out} equals the image defining luminance electronic information signal transformed in the manner of this invention to provide an enhanced image. As is now readily apparent, it is selected for the image defining luminance electronic information signal for each pixel as a function of a local average of image defining luminance electronic information signals for a select group or plurality of pixels closely spaced about the pixel value being enhanced or transformed. Thus, gamma γ changes continuously in correspondence with the average values from the continuous stream of succeeding image defining luminance electronic information signals so that each image defining luminance electronic information signal is enhanced or transformed by a selected one of a plurality of different transfer functions.

Referring now to FIG. 2, there is shown a graphical representation of the various transfer functions that are imposed by the transfer function circuit 16 as a

function of the variation in gamma γ. For the example as shown in FIG. 2, the control parameter C is selected to equal 1 and thus it can be seen that gamma γ has a variation of from 0.5 to 2. For instance, in the situation where the average value of the image defining luminance electronic signals is high and approaches the maximum value of the dynamic range which in this example equals 255 and is indicative of a portion of the image that is extremely bright, it can be seen that gamma γ equals 1 + C or as in the case where C = 1, gamma γ = 2 as shown in the diagram of FIG. 2. The slope of the transfer function as is readily apparent for the situation where gamma γ = 2 becomes quite steep at the high end of the dynamic range (B_{in}, B_{out}) thereby providing a higher contrast to those image defining luminance electronic information signals corresponding to pixels having the highest scene light intensity levels. The slope of the transfer function for γ = 2 decreases significantly at the low end of the dynamic range (A_{in}, A_{out}) thereby providing a lower contrast to those image defining luminance electronic information signals corresponding to pixels having the lowest scene light intensity levels. Since M is selected to be at the center of the dynamic range, it can be seen that the slope of the transfer function at the center of the dynamic range most closely approximates that of a straight line thereby providing the least effect on the output signal for pixels having intensity levels near the center of the dynamic range.

Conversely, in the situation where the average values of the image defining luminance electronic information signals are low approaching 0 indicative of localized areas of low scene light intensity levels, then gamma γ = 1 divided by 1 + C which equals 0.5 in the case where C = 1. The transfer function imposed by the transfer function circuit 16 in the case where gamma γ

equals 0.5 is shown graphically in FIG. 2 as comprising a substantially steep slope in the areas (A_{in}, A_{out}) where the image defining luminance electronic information signal values are low. Thus, the transfer function in this case where gamma γ equals 0.5 operates to transform the image defining luminance electronic information signals to provide a high contrast to those electronic information signals corresponding to pixels having the lowest scene light intensity levels. The slope of the transfer function for $\gamma = 0.5$ decreases significantly at the high end of the dynamic range (B_{in}, B_{out}) thereby providing a lower contrast to those image defining luminance electronic information signals corresponding to pixels having the highest scene light intensity levels. Again, since M is selected to be at the center of the dynamic range, it can be seen that the slope of the transfer function at the center of the dynamic range most closely approximates that of a straight line thereby providing the least effect on the output signal for pixels having intensity levels near the center of the dynamic range. It can be seen that the transfer function imposed by the transfer function circuit 16 can have any intermediate number of transfer functions shown between the extreme end transfer functions where gamma equals 0.5 or 2.0 and that all of the transfer functions are operative for the full extent of the input dynamic range so as not to clip the input signal values.

In the situation where the average value for the image defining luminance electronic information signal values corresponds to the intermediate value of the dynamic range, gamma $\gamma = 1$ and the transfer function becomes a straight line to provide a one-to-one relationship between the input and output electronic information signals with no localized increase in contrast as provided by the other transfer functions where gamma γ is either greater or less than 1. Thus, in this manner in

a situation where a scene may have localized dark or bright areas, there may be provided a localized increase in the contrast to those areas to make visible details that otherwise would be lost. The transfer functions vary in correspondence with the variation in the local average scene light intensity levels so as to apply the increased contrast selectively to those light or dark portions of the scene where details are otherwise obscured.

Referring now to FIG. 3, there is shown a graphical representation of the variation in gamma γ as a function of the variation of the control parameter C. Thus, it can be seen that for a control parameter C value of 1 gamma γ varies from 0.5 to 2. If the control parameter C is selected to be 0, gamma γ remains constant at 1. Although for a typical imaging application which requires dynamic range compression, it may be satisfactory to select the control parameter C to equal 1 thereby achieving an extreme variation in gamma from 2 to 0.5, it may be desirable to increase the amount of localized contrast thereby selecting values of the control parameter C greater than 1.

Referring now to FIG. 4 where like numerals reference previously discussed components, there is shown a circuit diagram for implementing a transfer function as described in connection with FIG. 1. The aforementioned transfer function may be converted to the following relationship by taking the logarithm on both sides of the aforementioned equation.

$$\log Y_{out} = \log Y_{MAX} + \gamma\,(\log Y_{in} - \log Y_{MAX})$$

Similarly, the relationship for determining gamma can also be rewritten as follows:

$$\log \gamma = (Av/M-1)[\log(1+C)]$$

These relationships can be implemented as shown by the circuit of FIG. 4. The average value of the image defining luminance electronic information signal is first

directed to a multiplier circuit 18 where the signal is multiplied by 1/M where M equals one-half the dynamic range of the electronic information signals as previously discussed. The output from the multiplier circuit 18, in turn, is directed to a combining circuit 20 which operates to add a negative 1 to the output from the multiplier circuit 18. The control parameter C is directed to a combiner circuit 22 which operates to add a positive 1 thereto. The output from the combiner circuit 22, in turn, is directed to a log circuit 24 which provides the logarithmic value for the C + 1 input thereto. The output from the logarithmic circuit 24, in turn, is multiplied by the output from the combining circuit 20 by a multiplier circuit 26. The output from the multiplier circuit 26, in turn, is directed to an antilogarithmic determining circuit 28 which operates utilizing a lookup table to provide the antilogarithm creating the value of gamma γ.

The image defining luminance electronic information signal for each pixel, in turn, is directed to a logarithm determining circuit 30 in the transfer function circuit 16. The output from the logarithm determining circuit 30, in turn, is directed to a combiner circuit 32 which operates to subtract therefrom the logarithm for the maximum dynamic range of the electronic information signals. The output from the combiner 32, in turn, is multiplied by multiplier circuit 34 by the value of gamma γ received from the antilogarithm determining circuit 28. The output from the multiplier 34, in turn, is directed to a combiner circuit 36 for addition to the logarithm of the maximum dynamic range of the electronic information signals. The output from the combiner circuit 36, in turn, is directed to an antilogarithm determining circuit 38 to provide the transformed image defining luminance electronic information signals Y_{out} as shown. Thus, in this manner, gamma γ is determined continuously

in accordance with the relationship as shown by the block diagram of FIG. 1 in a simple and convenient manner utilizing multiplication circuits, combining circuits, logarithm determining circuits, and antilogarithm determining circuits as shown in Fig. 4. In like manner, the transfer function continuously varied in accordance with the selection of gamma may also be imposed continuously in a simple and convenient manner by circuitry comprising a logarithm determining circuit, combining circuits, multiplication circuit, and an antilogarithm determining circuit. Thus, in this manner localized dynamic contrast enhancement can be provided as a function of dynamic gamma transformation on a pixel-by-pixel basis.

Thus, the system and method of this invention provides for enhancing electronic image data in a manner involving a relatively small number of computations that can be easily calculated in a continuous manner. All of the transfer functions that can be invoked are of a continuous nature without any sharp discontinuities that could otherwise result in undesirable artifacts appearing in the final image. In addition, as previously mentioned, none of the transfer functions operate to clip any portion of the incoming electronic information signal, thus resulting in the entire dynamic range of the incoming signal being transformed.

Other embodiments of the invention including additions, subtractions, deletions and other modifications of the preferred disclosed embodiments of the invention will be obvious to those skilled in the art and are within the scope of the following claims.

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What is claimed is:

SUBAD 1. A system for continuously enhancing electronic image data received in a continuous stream of electronic information signals, each signal corresponding to one of a plurality of succeeding pixels which collectively define an image, said system comprising:

means for averaging electronic information signals corresponding to selected pluralities of pixels and providing an average electronic information signal for each said plurality of pixels so averaged; and

means for selecting one of a plurality of different transfer functions for the electronic information signal for each of the succeeding pixels in a manner whereby each transfer function is selected as a function of the electronic information signal for one pixel and the average electronic information signal for the select plurality of pixels containing said one pixel and for subsequently transforming the electronic information signal corresponding to each pixel by the transfer function selected for that pixel.

2. The system of claim 1 wherein said selecting and transforming means includes means responsive to an average electronic information signal indicative of low scene light intensity levels for transforming the electronic information signals to provide a higher contrast to those electronic information signals corresponding to pixels having the lowest scene light intensity levels and is further responsive to an average electronic information signal indicative of high scene light intensity levels for transforming the electronic information signals to provide a higher contrast to those electronic information signals corresponding to pixels having the highest scene light intensity levels.

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3. The system of claim 2 wherein said selecting and transforming means further operates to select said transfer function as a function of the ratio of the value of the average electronic information signal to the dynamic range of the electronic information signals such that the ratio increases in correspondence with the increase in the value of the average electronic information signal.

3 ~~4~~. The system of claim 2 ~~3~~ wherein said selecting and transforming means further operates to select said transfer function as a function of a determined constant whose value corresponds to the amount of contrast provided in those areas of higher contrast provided by said select transfer function.

4 ~~5~~. The system of claim 3 ~~4~~ wherein said selecting and transforming means further operates to determine the select transfer function as a function of the determination of gamma (γ), said selecting and transforming means including means for determining gamma (γ) in accordance with the relationship

$$\gamma = (1 + C)^{(Av/M-1)}$$

where C equals said determined constant, Av equals the average electronic information signal value and M equals a select proportionate value of the dynamic range of the electronic information signals.

5 ~~6~~. The system of claim 4 ~~5~~ wherein said transforming means transforms the electronic information signal of each pixel in accordance with the relationship

$$Y_{out} = Y_{MAX}(Y_{in}/Y_{MAX})^{\gamma}$$

where Y_{in} equals the value of the electronic information signal of the pixel to be enhanced, Y_{out} equals the enhanced value of the input electronic information signal and Y_{MAX} equals the highest value of the dynamic range for the electronic information signals.

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7. A system for enhancing electronic image data received in a continuous stream of electronic information signals each signal corresponding to one of a plurality of succeeding pixels which collectively define an image, said system comprising:

means for averaging electronic information signals corresponding to selected pluralities of pixels and providing an average electronic information signal for each said plurality of pixels so averaged;

means for dividing each of the average electronic information signals corresponding to each pixel by a value M corresponding to a select proportionate value of the dynamic range of said electronic information signals;

first means for subtracting 1 from each of the electronic information signals output by said dividing means;

first means for adding a select control parameter and 1;

first means for determining the logarithm of the output from said first adding means;

first means for multiplying the output from said first logarithm determining means by the output from said first subtracting means;

first means for determining the antilogarithm of the output from said first multiplying means;

second means for determining the logarithm for each of the continuous streams of electronic information signals;

second means for subtracting the logarithm for a value corresponding to the maximum value of the electronic information signals from the output of said second logarithm determining means;

second means for multiplying the output of said first antilogarithm determining means by the output from said second subtracting means;

second means for adding the logarithm of the value corresponding to the maximum value of the electronic information signals to the output from said second multiplying means; and

second means for determining the antilogarithm of the output from said second adding means to provide an enhanced output signal value.

8. A method for continuously enhancing electronic image data received in a continuous stream of electronic information signals each signal corresponding to one of a plurality of succeeding pixels which collectively define an image, said method comprising the steps of:

averaging the electronic information signals corresponding to selected pluralities of pixels and providing an average electronic information signal for each said plurality of pixels;

selecting one of a plurality of different transfer functions for the electronic information signal for each of the plurality of succeeding pixels in a manner whereby each transfer function is selected as a function of the electronic information signal for one pixel and the average electronic information signal for the select plurality of pixels containing said one pixel; and

transforming the electronic information signal corresponding to each pixel by the transfer function selected for that pixel.

8 ~~9~~. The method of claim 7 ~~8~~ wherein the transfer function is selected: in response to an average electronic information signal indicative of low scene light intensity levels to provide a higher contrast to those electronic information signals corresponding to pixels having the lowest scene light intensity levels and in response to an average electronic information signal indicative of high scene light intensity levels to provide

a higher contrast to those electronic information signals corresponding to pixels having the highest scene light intensity levels.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein said transfer function is selected further as a function of the ratio of the value of the average electronic information signal to a select proportionate value of the dynamic range of the electronic information signals such that the ratio increases in correspondence with the increase in the value of the average electronic information signal.

9 ~~11~~. The method of claim ~~10~~ 9 8 wherein said transfer function is selected further as a function of a determined constant wherein increasing the value of said constant operates to increase the contrast in those areas of higher contrast provided by said select transfer function.

10 ~~12~~. The method of claim 9 ~~11~~ wherein said transfer function is selected as a function of the determination of gamma (γ) and gamma (γ) is determined for each pixel in accordance with the relationship

$$\gamma = (1 + C)^{(Av/M-1)}$$

where C equals said determined constant, Av equals the average electronic information signal value and M equals said value for one-half the dynamic range of the electronic information signals.

11 ~~13~~. The method of claim 10 ~~12~~ wherein said select transfer function for the electronic information signal of each pixel comprises the relationship

$$Y_{out} = Y_{MAX}(Y_{in}/Y_{MAX})^{\gamma}$$

where Y_{in} equals the value of the electronic information signal of the pixel to be enhanced, Y_{out} equals the enhanced value of the input electronic information signal and Y_{MAX} equals the highest value of the dynamic range for the electronic information signals.

12 ~~14~~. A method for enhancing electronic image data received in a continuous stream of electronic information signals each signal corresponding to one of a plurality of succeeding pixels which collectively define an image, said method comprising the steps of:

averaging the electronic information signals corresponding to selected pluralities of pixels and providing an average electronic information signal for each said plurality of pixels;

dividing each of the average electronic information signals corresponding to each pixel by a value M corresponding to a select proportionate value of the dynamic range of said electronic information signals;

subtracting 1 from each of the electronic information signals previously divided by the value M to provide a first intermediate signal value;

selecting a control parameter C as a function of the amount of image enhancement to be applied;

adding 1 to the control parameter C;

determining the logarithm of the control parameter C plus 1;

multiplying the logarithm of the control parameter C plus 1 by said first intermediate signal value to provide a second intermediate signal value;

determining the antilogarithm of the second intermediate signal value;

determining the logarithm for each of the continuous streams of electronic information signals;

subtracting from the previously determined logarithm for each of the continuous streams of electronic information signals the logarithm for a value corresponding to the maximum value of the electronic information signals to provide a third intermediate signal value;

multiplying the antilogarithm of the second intermediate signal value by the third intermediate signal value to provide a fourth intermediate signal value;

adding the logarithm of the value corresponding to the maximum value of the electronic information signals to the fourth intermediate signal value to provide a fifth intermediate signal value; and

determining the antilogarithm of the fifth intermediate signal value to provide an enhanced output signal value.

13 ~~15~~. The method of claim 12 ~~14~~ wherein said image enhancement operates to increase image contrast locally in areas of pixels having low contrast and said control parameter C is determined as a function of the amount of local contrast variation to be provided.

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Title: A SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR ELECTRONIC IMAGE ENHANCEMENT BY DYNAMIC PIXEL TRANSFORMATION

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A system and method are provided for continuously enhancing electronic image data received in a continuous stream of electronic information signals wherein the electronic information signal corresponding to each pixel of the image recorded is selectively transformed as a function of the average value of electronic information signals for a select plurality of pixel values in the immediate area of the pixel value being transformed. The electronic information signal transformations are provided on a pixel-by-pixel basis to increase contrast in localized areas that may be either exceptionally light or dark as a result of varying scene lighting conditions.

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DECLARATION FOR PATENT APPLICATION

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name,

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled A System and Method for Electronic Image Enhancement by Dynamic Pixel Transformation, the specification of which is attached hereto.

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to the examination of this application in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56(a).

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, §120, of any United States application(s) listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, §112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose material information as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56(a), which occurred between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of the continuation-in-part application;

None

(Application Serial No.) (Filing Date) (Status: patented, pending, abandoned)

(Application Serial No.) (Filing Date) (Status: patented, pending, abandoned)

I hereby appoint Edward S. Roman, Reg. No. 25,778

c/o Polaroid Corporation, Patent Department, 549 Technology Square, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139, my attorney(s) with full power of substitution, and revocation, to prosecute this application, to make alterations and amendments therein, to receive the Letters Patent, and to transact all business in the Patent Office connected therewith.

Please address all correspondence to Polaroid Corporation, Patent Department, 549 Technology Square, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139.

Direct calls to: Edward S. Roman at (617) 577-2518.

FORM A

7464

I further declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Full name of sole or first inventor Woo-Jin Song

Inventor's signature Woo J Song

Date 4/12/88

Residence 5509 Stearns Hill Road, Waltham, MA 02154

Citizenship Republic of Korea

Post Office Address same as above

Full name of second joint inventor, if any

Donald S. Levinstone

Second Inventor's Signature Donald S. Levinstone

Date 4/14/88

Residence 15 Taft Avenue, Lexington, MA 02173

Citizenship U.S.

Post Office Address same as above

Full name of third joint inventor, if any

NONE

Third Inventor's Signature

Date

Residence

Citizenship

Post Office Address

Full name of fourth joint inventor, if any

Fourth Inventor's Signature

Date

Residence

Citizenship

Post Office Address

As Original Filed

SP 7464 ESR SHEET 1 OF 2

18...

FIG 1

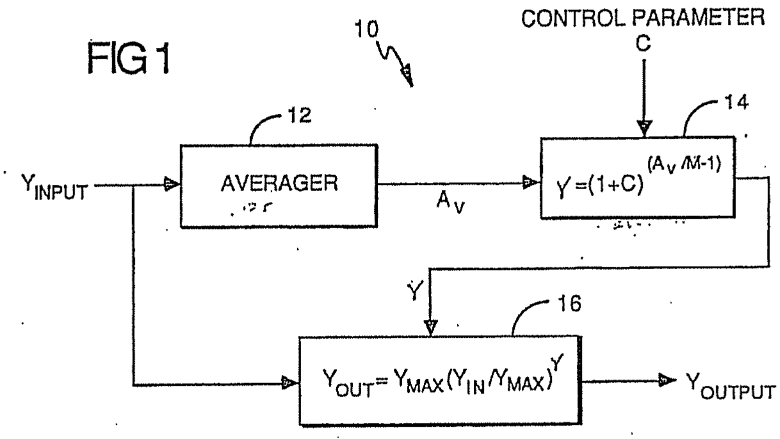
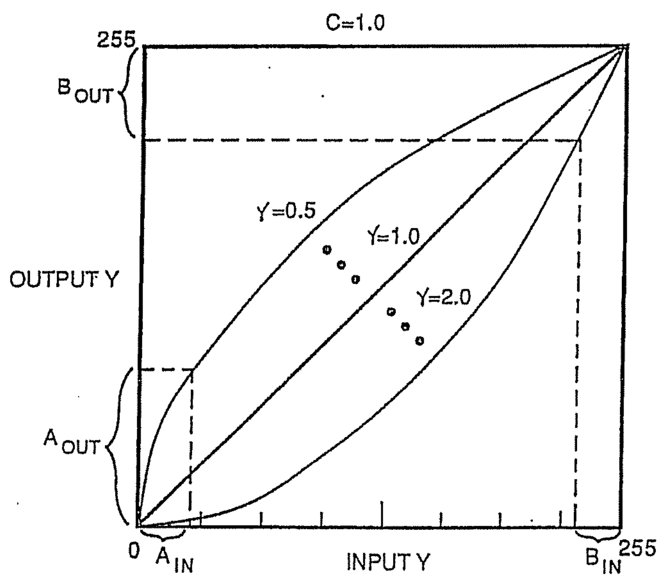


FIG 2



As Original Filed

CASE 7464 ESR SHEET 2 of 2

18[illegible]7

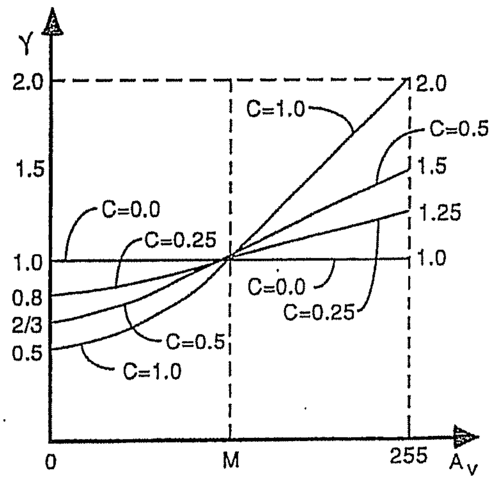


FIG 3

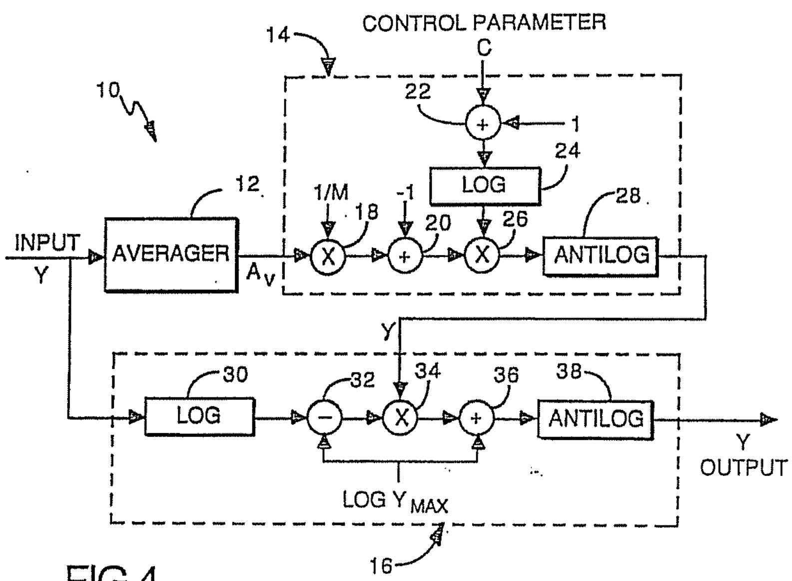


FIG 4

EXHIBIT C

MAIL ROOM OCT 24 1988 TRADEMARK

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS
Washington, D.C. 20231

SERIAL NUMBER	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED APPLICANT	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.
07/182,787	04/18/88	SONG	7404

POLAROID CORPORATION
PATENT DEPARTMENT
549 TECHNOLOGY SQ.
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

RECEIVED
OCT 17 1988
PATENT DEPT.

EXAMINER	
FARIS, E.	
ART UNIT	**PAPER NUMBER**
262	2

DATE MAILED: 10/14/88

RECEIVED
OCT 21 1988
GROUP 2__

This is a communication from the examiner in charge of your application.

COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS

☒ This application has been examined ☐ Responsive to communication filed on ______ ☐ This action is made final.

A shortened statutory period for response to this action is set to expire 3 month(s), ____ days from the date of this letter.
Failure to respond within the period for response will cause the application to become abandoned. 35 U.S.C. 133

Part I THE FOLLOWING ATTACHMENT(S) ARE PART OF THIS ACTION:

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited by Examiner, PTO-892.
2. ☐ Notice re Patent Drawing, PTO-948.
3. ☒ Notice of Art Cited by Applicant, PTO-1449
4. ☐ Notice of informal Patent Application, Form PTO-152
5. ☐ Information on How to Effect Drawing Changes, PTO-1474
6. ☐ ______

Part II SUMMARY OF ACTION

1. ☒ Claims 1-15 are pending in the application.

   Of the above, claims ______ are withdrawn from consideration.

2. ☐ Claims ______ have been cancelled.
3. ☐ Claims ______ are allowed.
4. ☒ Claims 1-15 are rejected.
5. ☐ Claims ______ are objected to.
6. ☐ Claims ______ are subject to restriction or election requirement.
7. ☐ This application has been filed with informal drawings which are acceptable for examination purposes until such time as allowable subject matter is indicated.
8. ☐ Allowable subject matter having been indicated, formal drawings are required in response to this Office action.
9. ☐ The corrected or substitute drawings have been received on ______. These drawings are ☐ acceptable; ☐ not acceptable (see explanation).
10. ☐ The ☐ proposed drawing correction and/or the ☐ proposed additional or substitute sheet(s) of drawings, filed on ______. has (have) been ☐ approved by the examiner. ☐ disapproved by the examiner (see explanation).
11. ☐ The proposed drawing correction, filed ______, has been ☐ approved. ☐ disapproved (see explanation). However, the Patent and Trademark Office no longer makes drawing changes. It is now applicant's responsibility to ensure that the drawings are corrected. Corrections MUST be effected in accordance with the instructions set forth on the attached letter "INFORMATION ON HOW TO EFFECT DRAWING CHANGES", PTO-1474.
12. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of the claim for priority under 35 U.S.C. 119. The certified copy has ☐ been received ☐ not been received ☐ been filed in parent application, serial no. ______; filed on ______.
13. ☐ Since this application appears to be in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under Ex parte Quayle, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.
14. ☐ Other

PTOL-326 (Rev. 7-82) EXAMINER'S ACTION

1. Claims 3-7 and 10-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

With respect to claim 3, there is no antecedent basis for "the ratio" (line 3), "the value" (lines 3) or "the dynamic range" (lines 4 and 5).

In claim 7, there is no antecedent basis for "the dynamic range" (line 13), "the logarithm" (line 19), "the antilogarithm" (line 24), "the logarithm" (line 26) or "the maximum value" (line 30).

In claim 10, "the ratio", "the ~~value~~ Value" (line 3), and "the dynamic range" lack antecedent basis.

In claim 14, there is no antecedent basis for "the dynamic range" (lines 12 and 13) "the amount" (line 18), "the logarithm" (line 20), "the antilogarithm" (line 25), and "the logarithm" (line 27).

Finally, in claims 15, "the amount" lacks antecedent basis.

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103 which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

> Subject matter developed by another person, which qualifies as prior art only under subsection (f) and (g) of section 102 of this title, shall not preclude patentability under this section where the subject matter and the claimed invention were, at the time the invention was made, owned by the same person or subject to an obligation of assignment to the same person.

3. Claims 1, 2, 8 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Okada. 4,499,349

With respect to claims 1, 2, 8 and 9, Okada discloses a video brightness control circuit having an average picture level detector 20 which averages input picture information and provides a control signal to a variable correction circuit 10. The variable correction circuit operates on the input-output signal to vary the characteristic of the input-output signal as a function of the detected average picture level detector (see Fig. 2). Okada controls the relative brightness of the video signal such that the picture areas containing most of the picture information are corrected to give greater contrast. Although, Okada does not identically disclose all the limitation as recited in claims 1, 2, 8 and 9, Okada does provide a system which attempts to achieve the same results as the applicant. Both systems show an averaging circuit and a correction circuit which use the averaged information to produce an output which follows the slopes of the curves shown in Figure 2 of the present invention and Figure 2 of Okada. Therefore, claims 1, 2, 8 and 9 would have been obvious in view of Okada.

5. Claims 3-6 and 10-13 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112 and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

6. Claims 7, 14 and 15 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112.

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to A. Faris whose telephone number is (703) 557-6271.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 557-3321.

A. FARIS:flj

703-557-6271

10-12-88

James J. Groody
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Art Unit 262

TO SEPARATE, HOLD TOP AND BOTTOM EDGES, SNAP–APART AND DISCARD CARBON

FORM PTO-892 (REV. 3-78) U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

SERIAL NO. 182987 | GROUP ART UNIT 262 | ATTACHMENT TO PAPER NUMBER 2

NOTICE OF REFERENCES CITED

APPLICANT(S): Song et al

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

*		DOCUMENT NO.	DATE	NAME	CLASS	SUB-CLASS	FILING DATE IF APPROPRIATE
	A	4215294	7/80	Taggart	358	168X	
	B	4334244	6/82	Chan et al	358	166	
	C	4489349	12/84	Okada	358	168	
	D	4523230	6/85	Carlson et al	358	167	
	E	4549212	10/85	Bayer	358	167	
	F	4568978	2/86	Cosh	358	32X	
	G	4751566	6/88	Pilot	358	32	
	H						
	I						
	J						
	K						

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

*		DOCUMENT NO.	DATE	COUNTRY	NAME	CLASS	SUB-CLASS	PERTINENT SHTS. DWG	PP. SPEC.
X	L	2312150	12/76	France	Thomson	358	164		
X	M	1605009	12/81	GB	Augustin et al	358	168		
	N								
	O								
	P								
	Q								

OTHER REFERENCES (Including Author, Title, Date, Pertinent Pages, Etc.)

R	
S	
T	
U	

EXAMINER: A. Faris | DATE: 10-2-88

* A copy of this reference is not being furnished with this office action. (See Manual of Patent Examining Procedure, section 707.05 (a).)

OMB No. 0651-0011 (12/31/86)

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE CITATION (Use several sheets if necessary)	ATTY. DOCKET No. 7464/ESR	SERIAL NO. 182987
	APPLICANT Woo-Jin Song and Donald S. Levinstone	
	FILING DATE 4-18-88	GROUP 260

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

EXAMINER INITIAL		DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE	NAME	CLASS	SUBCLASS	FILING DATE IF APPROPRIATE
DF		4663667	5/87	Shenk	358	169	

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

		DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE	COUNTRY	CLASS	SUBCLASS	TRANSLATION YES	TRANSLATION NO

OTHER DOCUMENTS (Including Author, Title, Date, Pertinent Pages, Etc.)

EXAMINER	DATE CONSIDERED
D. Faris	10-2-88

*EXAMINER: Initial if reference considered, whether or not citation is in conformance with MPEP 609; Draw line through citation if not in conformance and not considered. Include copy of this form with next communication to applicant.

Form PTO-FB-A820 (also form PTO-1449)

Patent and Trademark Office - U.S. DEPARTMENT of COMMERCE

EXHIBIT D

United States Patent [19]
Okada

[11] Patent Number: 4,489,349
[45] Date of Patent: Dec. 18, 1984

[54] VIDEO BRIGHTNESS CONTROL CIRCUIT

[75] Inventor: Takashi Okada, Yokohama, Japan
[73] Assignee: Sony Corporation, Tokyo, Japan

[21] Appl. No.: 230,394
[22] Filed: Feb. 2, 1981

[30] Foreign Application Priority Data

Jan. 31, 1980 [JP] Japan 55-10667

[51] Int. Cl.^{3} H04N 5/68
[52] U.S. Cl. 358/168; 358/32; 358/164
[58] Field of Search 358/168, 39, 74, 243, 358/32, 164

[56] References Cited

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2,255,691 9/1941 Wilson 358/164
3,619,496 11/1971 Lichtenstein 358/168
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4,044,375 8/1977 Norman 358/168
4,091,419 5/1978 Rhee 358/168
4,298,885 11/1981 Okada 358/39

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

2312150 1/1977 France 358/164
71604 1/1980 Japan 358/168

Primary Examiner—Tommy P. Chin
Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Lewis H. Eslinger; Alvin Sinderbrand

[57] ABSTRACT

A control circuit for controlling the relative brightness of a video signal includes an average picture level (APL) detector to measure the average brightness of the video signal and a brightness control circuit responsive to the detected average brightness to provide an output video signal wherein the picture areas containing most of the picture information are corrected to give greater contrast. In the output signal, portions corresponding to the black and peak white levels of the incoming video signals are provided substantially at the black and peak white levels, respectively, while the average brightness level of the output video signal is provided at an optimum level, such as 50%. The brightness control circuit can include a variable gamma correction circuit in which the value of gamma is automatically determined by a control signal provided from the APL detector.

21 Claims, 13 Drawing Figures

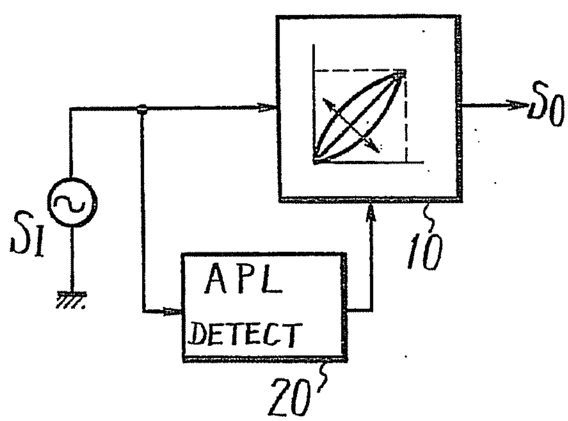


FIG. 1

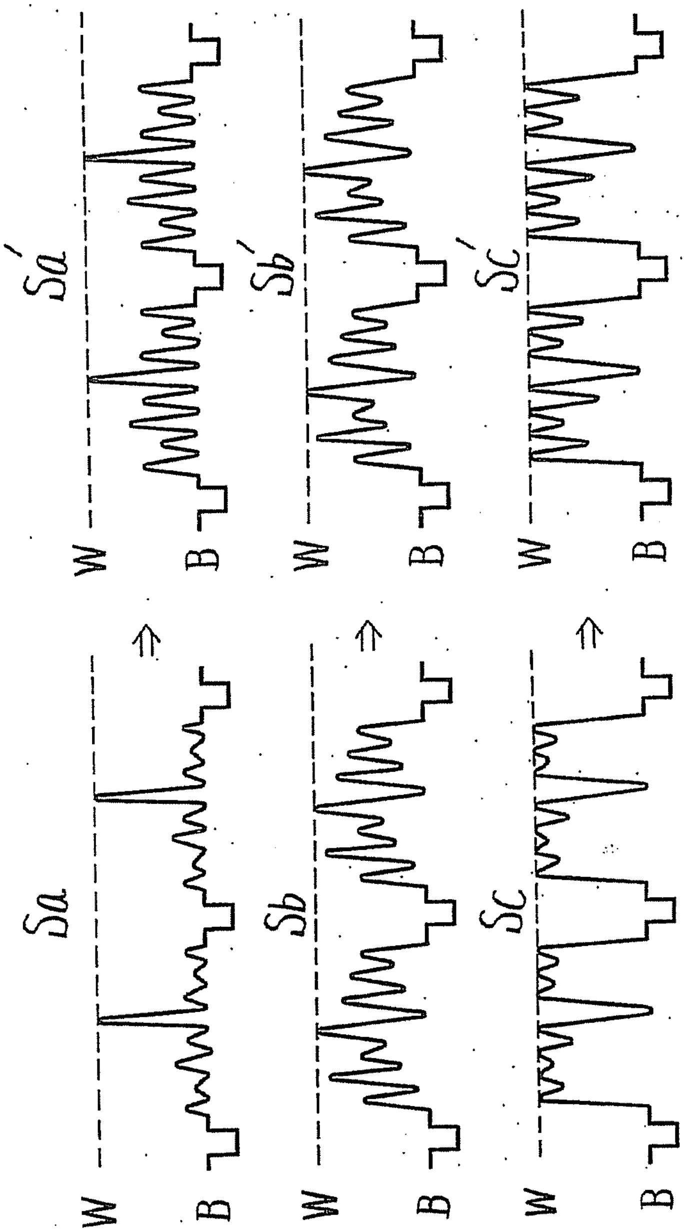


FIG. 2

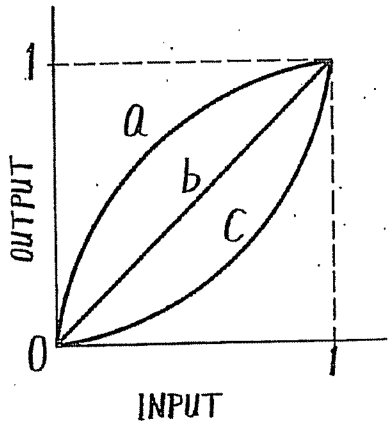


FIG. 3

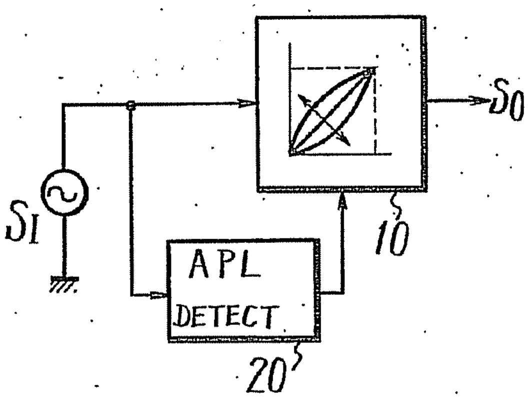


FIG. 4

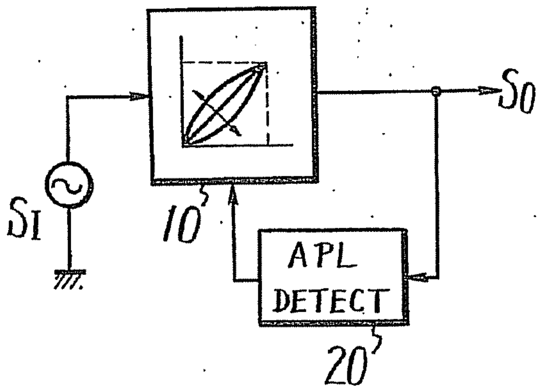


FIG. 5

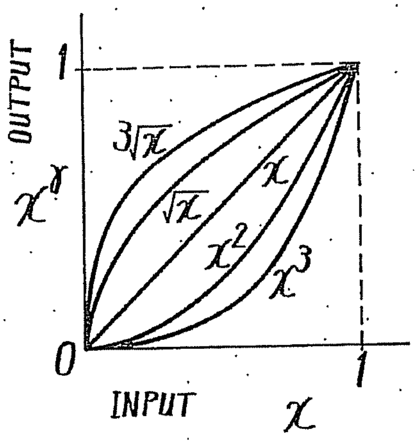
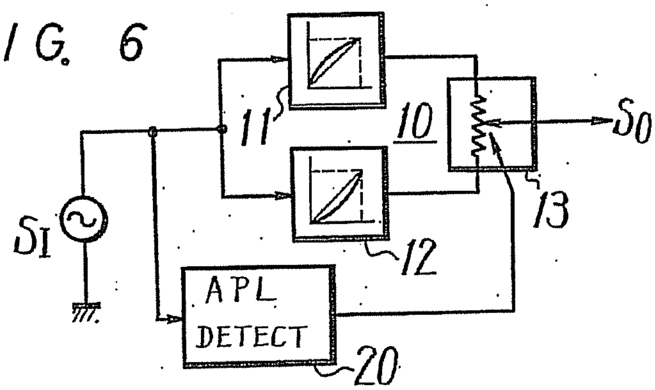
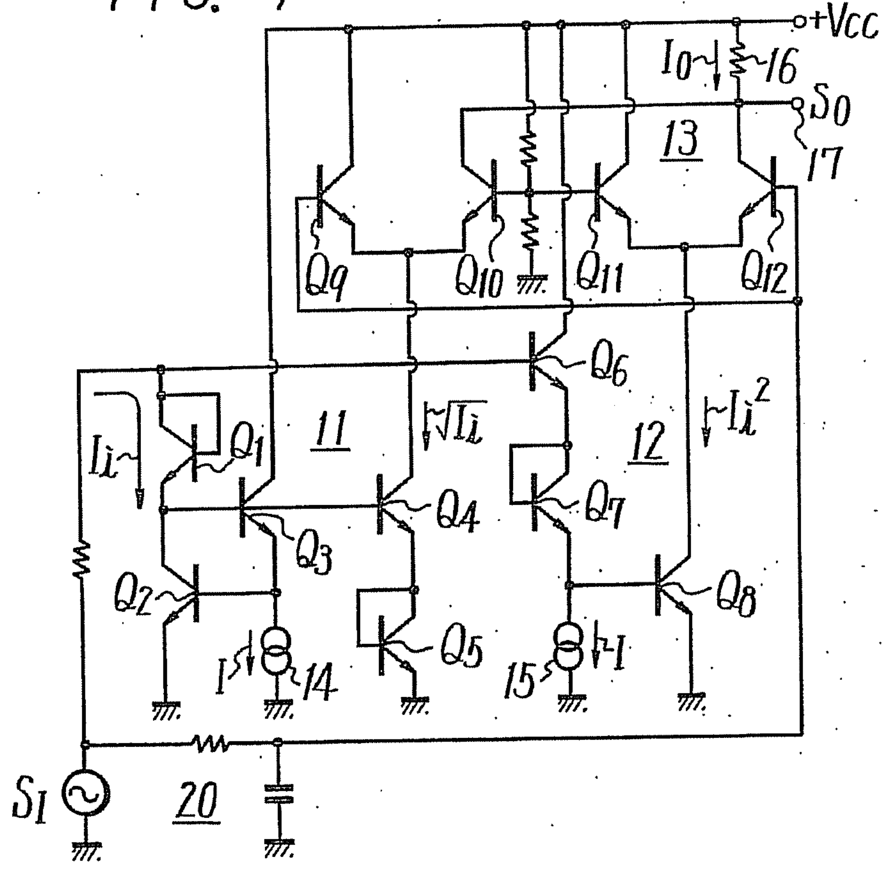


FIG. 6



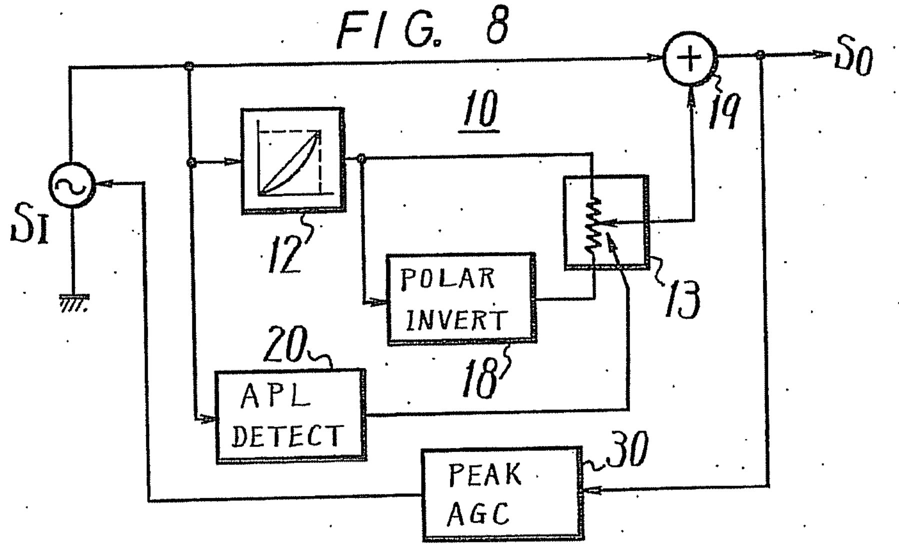
11
10
12
13
S_0
S_I
APL DETECT
20

FIG. 7



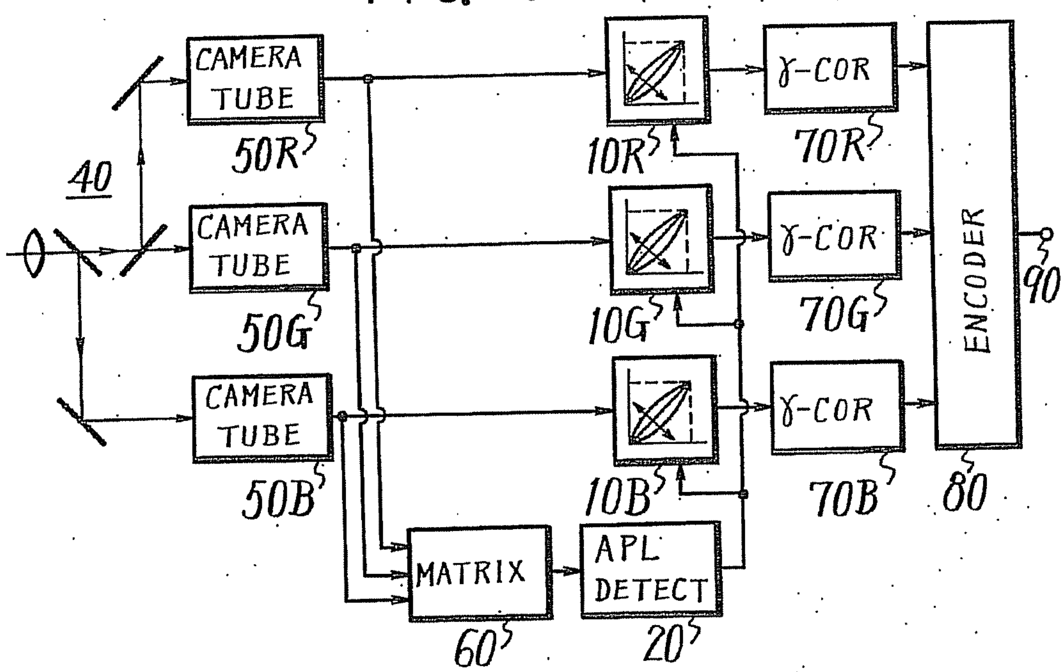
+Vcc
I_0
16
S_0
17
13
Q9
Q10
Q11
Q12
Q6
Q1
11
$\sqrt{I_i}$
12
I_i^2
I_i
Q4
Q3
Q7
Q2
Q8
I
14
Q5
15
I
S_I
20

FIG. 8



SO
10
19
SI
12
POLAR
INVERT
13
20
18
APL
DETECT
30
PEAK
AGC

FIG. 9



CAMERA
TUBE
50R
40
10R
γ-COR
70R
CAMERA
TUBE
50G
10G
γ-COR
70G
ENCODER
90
CAMERA
TUBE
50B
10B
γ-COR
70B
80
MATRIX
60
APL
DETECT
20

FIG. 10

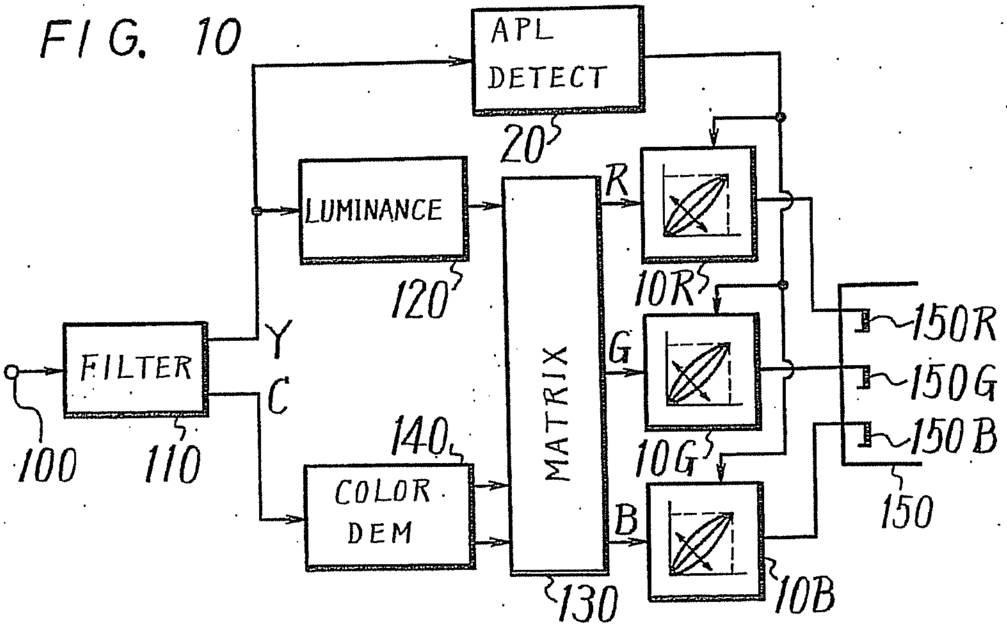


FIG. 11

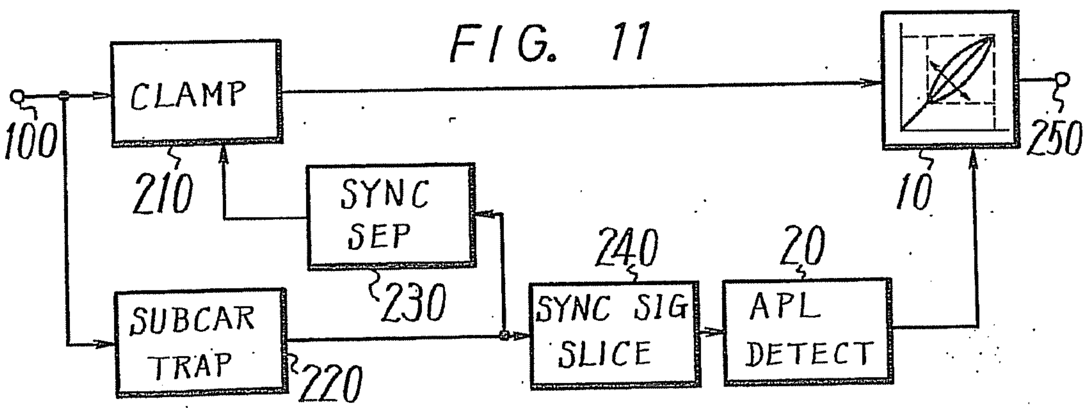


FIG. 12

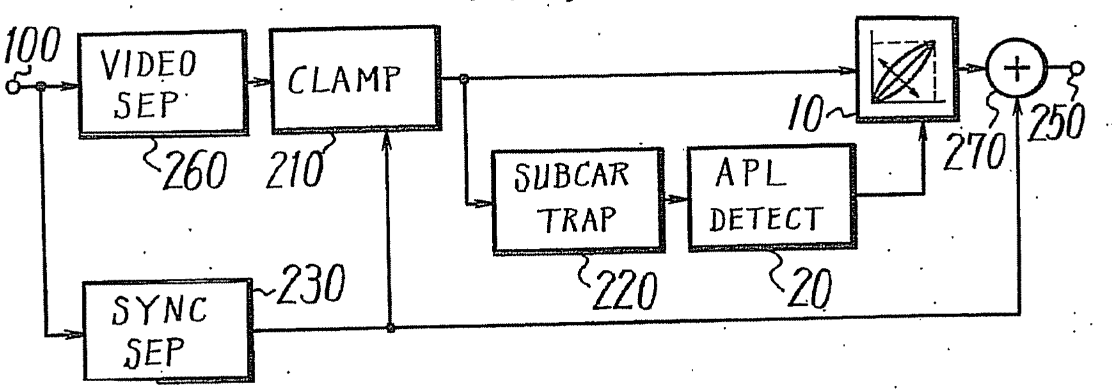
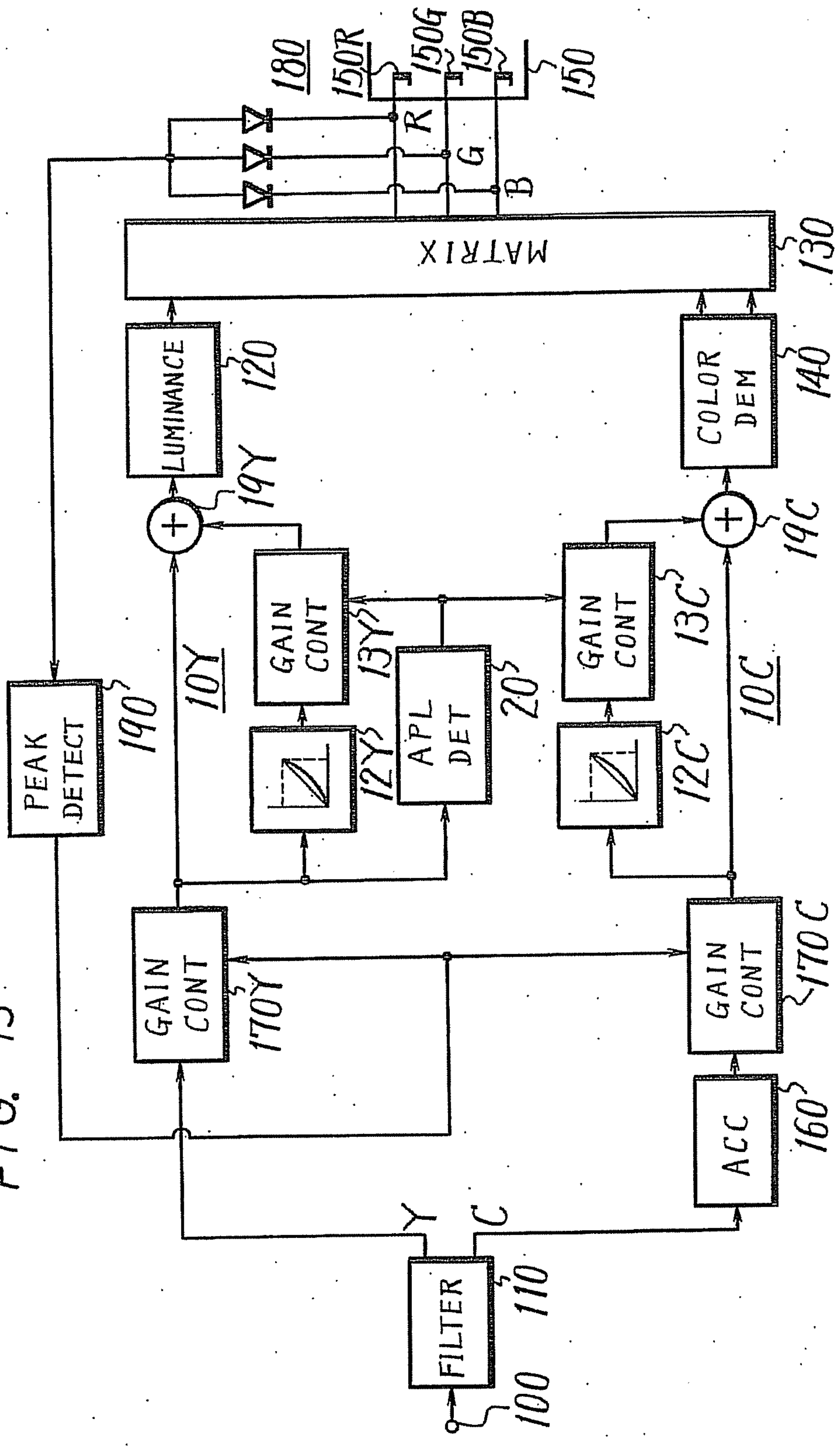


FIG. 13



FILTER
100
110
Y
C
GAIN CONT
170Y
GAIN CONT
170C
ACC
160
PEAK DETECT
190
10Y
10C
12Y
12C
13Y
13C
GAIN CONT
GAIN CONT
APL DET
20
19Y
19C
LUMINANCE
120
COLOR DEM
140
MATRIX
130
R
G
B
180
150R
150G
150B
150

VIDEO BRIGHTNESS CONTROL CIRCUIT

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention:

This invention relates to video signal processing circuitry and particularly relates to circuitry for controlling the brightness of a video signal so that detail of interest in a video picture will appear natural and have good contrast.

2. Brief Description of the Prior Art:

Natural illumination can have an extremely wide brightness range, and will necessarily have a vast range of contrast scales. The human eye adapts itself remarkably well for viewing naturally-lit objects and can with ease perceive detail in shadows and in brightly lit areas as well. Nevertheless, color video cameras and color video display apparatus are not easily adaptable to conditions of natural illumination, and current videocasting practices require special techniques, such as supplemental fill-in lighting, to provide a pleasing yet natural picture.

However, when such special techniques are unavailable, such as during on-scene news reporting, the picture presented on a display apparatus can be harsh and unpleasant. For example, if an on-the-spot newscast takes place at night with a newscaster at the news scene standing in front of a bright source, such as a flashing neon sign, the picture is likely to be harsh and without good detail. In such a scene, the presentation of the neon light is bright but the other objects in the picture are dark, and the contrast range among such objects is extremely narrow. Thus, except for the neon sign, the picture appears objectionably dim and observation of detail in the picture is difficult.

This problem can be understood by considering that while a color camera can be responsive to input light having an illumination range of from several hundred to several hundred thousand lux, the electrical output of the camera is limited to a range of, for example, 1 volt peak-to-peak. The input light must have a limited illumination range, e.g. 100 to 200 lux or several thousand to several tens of thousands of lux, in order that all of the video output signal remain within the range of 1 volt peak-to-peak. If these illumination limits are not observed, a conventional color television camera and display apparatus will not provide a good, pleasing picture.

Brightness adjustment in the video transmission is now carried out to a limited extent by use of so-called gamma (γ) correction. This process compensates for the differences in gamma values between the image pickup tube of a television camera and the cathode ray tube (CRT) of a television receiver.

Normally, the picked-up image is gamma-corrected before transmission so that the net gamma value of the image pickup and image display will be unity.

Conventionally, gamma correction is carried out on the image pickup side so that the output signal is skewed logarithmically at the saturated (white) side of the brightness range. Then, the skewed curve is expanded somewhat at the CRT, due to its inherent gamma characteristic, so that the picture brightness is correct.

Generally, if the overall gamma characteristic is logarithmic, the dark picture portions will have expanded contrast, and fine dark or shadow detail is reproduced. Conversely, if the gamma characteristic is exponential,

the bright portions will have expanded contrast, and detail in brightly lit areas will be clear.

Further, the lower illumination intensity portions of the video signal are affected by noise in the video apparatus. Consequently, a good video picture cannot be obtained for any scene unless the picture brightness is properly adjusted to span the entire dynamic range of the video apparatus. Accordingly, the actual brightness of an object in the scene does not convert exactly to a particular level of the video output signal, especially if the object is not evenly illuminated. The image of such an object in an unevenly-lit scene is not easily visible when reproduced on a video screen, and hence fatigues the eyes, making viewing somewhat tiring and unpleasant.

OBJECTS AND SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Accordingly, it is an object of this invention to provide a technique wherein an image on a video screen is provided with the portion of the picture of most interest having relatively high contrast.

It is a further object of this invention to provide a correction circuit for use, for example, in a color television receiver, which will automatically adjust the brightness of the television signal so that a pleasing picture is presented on the display screen of the receiver, even when the scene is unevenly illuminated.

According to an aspect of this invention, a control circuit for controlling the brightness of a video signal that fluctuates between a peak dark level, such as the black level, and a peak bright level, such as the peak white level, about an average brightness level comprises an average picture level (APL) detector for detecting the average brightness level and, in response, providing a corresponding control signal, and a brightness adjusting circuit for optimizing the brightness of the video signal in response to the control signal, and providing a video output signal in which respective portions of the video output signal corresponding to portions of the incoming video signal at the peak dark level and the peak bright level are provided at the peak dark level and the peak bright level, but in which the average picture level is provided at an optimum level, such as the 50% brightness level.

The brightness adjusting circuit can favorably be formed as an adjustable gamma circuit, in which the value of gamma is determined in accordance with the control signal from the APL detector. In other words, the brightness adjusting circuit has an input-output characteristic such that for a video input signal having a level proportional to a value X, where X is in the range $0 \leqq X \leqq 1$, the video output signal is provided at a level proportional to a value X^{γ}, and the value γ is automatically determined in response to the control signal so that the video output signal has an APL at the optimum level.

A correction circuit according to this invention can be incorporated into a color television camera, in which case three brightness adjusting circuits can be included to be operative on respective primary color signals. The circuit of this invention can also be incorporated in a color television receiver. In such case, three brightness adjusting circuits can be provided, each operative upon a separate primary color signal, a single brightness adjusting circuit, operative upon both the chrominance and luminance components of a composite color video signal can be provided, or, alternatively, two brightness

adjusting circuits can be provided, one operative upon the luminance component, the other operative upon the chrominance component of a composite color video signal.

Various other features and advantages of the present invention will be apparent from the following description of several preferred embodiments, when considered with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a set of charts showing video waveforms before and after treatment in the correction circuit of this invention.

FIG. 2 is an input-output graph for explaining the operation of a portion of the correction circuit of this invention.

FIGS. 3 and 4 are diagrammatic views showing the basic construction of the circuit of this invention.

FIG. 5 is an input-output graph for explaining the present invention.

FIG. 6 is a systematic block diagram showing one embodiment of the correction circuit of this invention.

FIG. 7 is a detailed circuit diagram showing a practical example of the embodiment of FIG. 6.

FIG. 8 is a systematic block diagram showing another embodiment of the circuit of this invention.

FIG. 9 is a systematic block diagram of a three-tube color television camera incorporating the present invention therein.

FIG. 10 is a systematic block diagram of a portion of a video display apparatus incorporating the present invention.

FIGS. 11 and 12 are systematic block diagrams of video signal processing circuits for use in video receivers and incorporating the present invention.

FIG. 13 is a systematic block diagram of a portion of a video receiver incorporating the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTIONN OF SEVERAL PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

With reference to the drawings, and initially to FIG. 1, typical video signals Sa, Sb, Sc will be considered. In the charts of FIG. 1, the video signals have an amplitude ranging between a black level B and a peak white level W. Each of the video signals Sa, Sb, Sc, has a broad brightness amplitude range extending from black to white.

The signal Sa represents a dimly-lit scene having a single bright portion. In this case, most of the picture detail is in dark tones in the dimly lit portion, and only a small portion of the picture is bright. As a result, the signal-to-noise ratio of the picture is quite low and the signal Sa produces a dirty or hazy picture.

In the signal Sb, bright and dark tones are substantially uniformly distributed, indicating that the televised scene is ideally illuminated. The entire dynamic range of the signal Sb is used effectively so that the signal Sb has a high signal-to-noise ratio, and will produce a fine quality picture.

The signal Sc represents a scene which is brightly lit, but which includes a dark object. Here most of the detail is in bright tones, and the brightness of the picture will cause such detail to become very faint. Signals such as the signal Sc occur rather often when televising scenes out of doors, especially scenes including snow or scenes at a beach.

As aforesaid, the video signals Sa and Sc, although faithfully corresponding to the objects in the respective

televised scenes, include detail in the dimly and brightly lit portions, respectively, which will not be easy to see, due to the limited signal-to-noise ratio of the video display apparatus. According to this invention, the video signals Sa and Sc have their brightness levels optimized so that important detail in the picture portions having the largest amount of picture information can be observed with good contrast. Consequently, the image displayed on the video screen will be pleasing and easy to view.

In order to achieve this, the video signal is processed through a circuit having an input-output characteristic as shown in FIG. 2.

When the signal Sa is supplied an input, the input-output characteristic is caused to follow curve a of FIG. 2 so that the dimly-lit portions are expanded in contrast while the brightly-lit portions are compressed in contrast, with the result that the processed video signal Sa' is provided as an output video signal.

When the signal Sc is applied as an input, the input-output characteristic thereof follows curve c, so that the brightly-lit portions of the video picture are expanded, while the dimly-lit portions are compressed, so that an output signal Sc' is provided as shown in FIG. 1.

Finally, when the signal Sb is applied as an input, the input-output characteristic becomes a linear function as shown by curve b in FIG. 2, so that the output signal Sb' is provided, and the latter is identical with the input signal Sb.

In order to optimize the output video signals Sa' Sb', and Sc', the input-output characteristic must be changed continuously and automatically according to the information distribution of the input signals Sa, Sb, and Sc. Because the picture information distribution is akin to the proportional amount of bright and dimly-lit portions of the picture, the information distribution can be easily obtained by detecting the average picture level (APL) of the input signals Sa, Sb, and Sc. In other words, when the amount of informationn near the black level B is great, as in the signal Sa, the APL will be low. By contrast, when the amount of information near the peak white level W is great, as in the signal Sc, the APL will be high. Because the Sb has information distributed uniformly between the back B and peak white level W, the signal Sb will have an APL of about 50%.

Accordingly, the input-output characteristic a of FIG. 2 is selected for low APL values, the characteristic c is selected for high APL values, and the linear characteristic b is selected when the APL is at or near its optimum level of 50%. Further, when the APL is at some intermediate level, the input-output characteristic can be selected intermediate the curves a and b or intermediate the curves b and c.

Throughout the following description of various embodiments of this invention, common elements will be identified with the same reference characters, and a description of such elements will be provided only with respect to the embodiment with which they are first introduced.

One embodiment showing the basic construction of a correction circuit according to this invention is illustrated in FIG. 3. A video input information signal Si is furnished to an input of a variable correction circuit 10 and is also furnished to an APL detecting circuit 20. The latter detects the APL of the input signal Si and provides a control signal to a control input of the variable correction circuit 10. The variable correction circuit 10 automatically adjusts its input-output character-

istic in response to the control signal, and thus also, the input-output characteristic varies as a function of the detected APL. Consequently, the variable correction circuit provides an optimized output signal S_O.

Another example of the control circuit of this invention is shown in FIG. 4, wherein the output signal S_O is fed back to the APL detecting circuit 20, so that the input-output characteristic of the variable correction circuit 10 is determined in accordance with the average picture level of the output signal S_O.

The open-loop configuration of FIG. 3 has the advantage of fast and reliable response to changes in APL, while the closed-loop configuration of FIG. 4 has the advantage of superior accuracy in correcting the brightness characteristic of the video signal.

Practical input-output characteristics of the variable correction circuit are illustrated in FIG. 5, in which the absissa represents an input while the ordinate represents an output X^γ. Here, the input and output remain between values of "0" (representing the black level) and "1" (representing the peak white level). The value of γ is changed according to the detected APL value. For example, when the APL is detected to be below 50%, γ is selected as $\delta=\frac{1}{2}$, and the output becomes $\sqrt{X}$; when the detected APL is at 50%, γ is selected as unity, and the output becomes X; and when the detected APL is above 50%, γ is selected as $\gamma=2$, and the outout becomes X^2. For extreme values of the detected APL, γ can be selected as $\gamma\pm\frac{1}{3}$ so that the output becomes $\sqrt[3]{X}$ when the detected APL is extremely low, and $\gamma=3$ so that the output becomes X^3 when the detected APL is extremely high.

A practical embodiment of the correction circuit of this invention is shown in FIG. 6, and the details thereof are illustrated in FIG. 7. In this embodiment, the variable correction circuit 10 is composed of a first correction circuit 11 having an input-output characteristic of $\gamma=\frac{1}{2}$ (i.e., a square-root circuit with an output $\sqrt{X}$), and a second correction circuit 12 having an input-output characteristic of $\gamma=2$ (i.e., a squaring circuit with an output X^2). When the input video signal S_I is applied to respective inputs of each of the first and second correction circuits 11 and 12, the latter in turn provide first and second corrected video signals which are proportional to $\sqrt{X}$ and X^2, respectively. A summing circuit 13 combines the first and second corrected video signals in proportional amounts depending on the value of the control signal from the APL detector 20. Thus, when the APL is low, only the first corrected video signal $\sqrt{X}$ is provided. When the APL is high, only the second corrected video signal $\sqrt{X}$ is provided. When the APL is determined to be 50%, the first and second corrected video signals are provided in equal amounts so that the output signal S_O has the output characteristic

$$\frac{\sqrt{X}+X^2}{2},$$

that is, the output signal S_O will be approximately the same as the input signal S_I. It should be noted that for $0<X<1$, the value of the expression

$$\frac{\sqrt{X}+X^2}{2}$$

will be very close to the value $X(\gamma=1)$, and the two expressions will have the same value at 0, 1, and approximately 0.38.

In the practical circuit shown in FIG. 7, the first correction circuit 11 includes a constant current source 14; a diode-connected transistor Q_1, having its base and collector connected together to receive an input signal current I_i; an auxiliary transistor Q_2 having its collector coupled to the emitter of the transistor Q_1 and its emitter connected to ground; an input transistor Q_3 having its collector connected to a voltage source V_{CC}, its base connected to the emitter of the transistor Q_1, and its emitter coupled to the constant current source 14 and also to the base of the transistor Q_2; and an output transistor Q_4 having its base connected to the base of transistor Q_3 and the emitter of the transistor Q_1, and its collector providing the first output correction signal current $\sqrt{I_i}$. A diode-connected transistor Q_5 is connected between the emitter of the transistor Q_4 and ground.

The second correcting circuit 12 includes a constant current source 15, and input transistor Q_6 having its base connected to receive the input signal S_I and its collector connected to the voltage source V_{CC}; a diode-connected transistor Q_7 having its base and collector connected to the emitter of the transistor Q_6 and its emitter connected to the constant current source 15; and an output transistor Q_8 having its base connected to the emitter of the transistor Q_7, its emitter connected to ground, and its collector providing a second output correction signal current I_i^2.

The summing circuit 13 is formed of a load resistor 16 connected to the voltage source V_{CC}; a first transistor Q_9 having its collector connected to the voltage V_{CC} and its base connected to receive the control signal from the APL detecting circuit 20; a second transistor Q_{10} having its collector connected to the load resistor 16 and its emitter, together with the emitter of the first transistor Q_9 connected to the collector of the output transistor Q_4. The summing circuit 13 also includes a third transistor Q_{11} having its collector connected to the voltage source V_{CC}, and its base together with the base of the transistor Q_{10} biased at a predetermined level. Also included is a fourth transistor Q_{12} having its collector connected to the load resistor 16, its base connected to receive the control signal from the APL detecting circuit 20, and its emitter, together with the emitter of the third transistor Q_{11} connected to the collector of the output transistor Q_8. An output terminal 17 is connected to the junction of the load resistor 16 with the collectors of the transistors Q_{10} and Q_{12}.

In this embodiment, the APL detecting circuit 20 is a low-pass filter composed of a resistor and a capacitor.

The specific operation of the embodiment depicted in FIG. 7 is explained as follows:

In this circuit, if equal constant currents I are provided from each of the constant current sources 14 and 15, the base-emitter forward voltages of the transistors Q_1 to Q_8 are represented as V_{BE1} to V_{BE8}, respectively, and the transistors Q_1 to Q_8 have respective collector currents I_1 to I_8, respectively, the following relationship is obtained:

$$V_{BE2}+V_{BE3}=V_{BE4}+V_{BE5} \quad (1)$$

As is well known, the base-emitter forward voltage V_{BE} of a transistor can be expressed as a function of its collector current I_c and the saturation current I_s thereof according to the following equation:

$$V_{BE}=KT/g \ln I_C/I_s \quad (2)$$

where g is an electric charge constant relating to the number of charge carriers in the base-emitter junction, K is the Boltzmann constant, and T is a constant having units of temperature. Accordingly, the currents of the transistors Q_2 to Q_5 will have the relationship

$$I_2 \cdot I_3 = I_4 \cdot I_5 \quad (3)$$

In this circuit, I_2 is equal to the input current I_i, I_3 is equal to the current I of the constant current source **14**, and I_4 is equal to I_5, so that the latter currents can be expressed as $I_4=I_5=I_m$. Accordingly, the following relationship results:

$$I_i \cdot I = I_m^2 \quad (4)$$

that is,

$$I_m = \sqrt{I} \cdot \sqrt{I_i} \quad (5)$$

If it is assumed that the current I of the constant current source **14** is unity, then I=1, and

$$I_m = \sqrt{I_i} \quad (6)$$

Thus, the first correction circuit **11** has a gamma of ½.

At the same time, in the second correction circuit **13**, the base-emitter voltages of the transistors Q_6, Q_7, and Q_8 can be expressed

$$V_{BE1}+V_{BE3}+V_{BE2}=V_{BE6}+V_{BE7}+V_{BE8} \quad (7)$$

and the respective collector currents can be expressed as

$$I_1 \cdot I_3 \cdot I_2 = I_6 \cdot I_7 \cdot I_8 \quad (8)$$

In addition, because the currents I_1 and I_2 are each equal to the input current I_i, and the currents I_3, I_6, and I_7 are each identical with the current I from the constant current source **15**, if the current I_8 is expressed an I_n, the following relationship results:

$$I_i^2 \cdot I = I^2 \cdot I_n \quad (9)$$

or

$$I_n = (1/I) \cdot I_i^2 \quad (10)$$

thus, if, as aforesaid, the current I is unity, then

$$I_n = I_i^2 \quad (11)$$

Consequently, the second correction circuit **12** has a gamma of 2.

In the summing circuit **13**, a current $k \cdot \sqrt{I_i}$ flows through the collector of the second transistor Q_{10} while a current of $(1-k)I_i^2$ flows through the collector of the fourth transistor Q_{12}, where k is a positive number less than unity which is determined according to the average picture level voltage from the APL circuit **20**. As a result, an output current I_O flows through the load resistor **16**, and can be expressed as follows:

$$I_0 = k\sqrt{I_i} + (1-k)I_i^2 \quad (12)$$

In other words, when the APL is detected to be extremely low, the transistors Q_9 and Q_{12} are rendered nonconductive so that the constant k is unity, and the output current I_O equals the current $\sqrt{I_i}$ from transistor Q_4. When the APL is approximately 50%, k=½, and the output current I_O can be expressed.

$$I_0 = \frac{\sqrt{I_i} + I_i^2}{2}.$$

When the APL is determined to be high, the second and third transistors Q_{10} and Q_{11} are rendered nonconductive so that the constant k=0 and I_O can be expressed

$$I_0 = \sqrt{I_i}.$$

Of course, for intermediate values of the detected APL, the constant k will take on intermediate values of gamma so that the output signal S_O will provide a video picture of optimum contrast.

Another embodiment of the correction circuit according to this invention is illustrated in FIG. **8**. In this embodiment, the variable correction circuit **10** is formed of the squaring circuit **12** having its input coupled to receive the input signal S_i, a polarity inverter **18** coupled to the output of the squaring circuit **12**, and the summing circuit **13** connected to combine the output of the squaring circuit **12** with an inverted replica thereof provided from the polarity inverter **18**. Also in this embodiment, an adder **19** is included to combine the input video signal with the resultant video signal provided from the summing circuit **13**.

The summing ratio of the corrected signal from the squaring circuit **12** and the inverted replica thereof is changed according to the control signal furnished from the APL detector **20**. Since the output of the polarity inverter **18** is expressed as $-X^2$, the output of the summing circuit **13** can be expressed as

$$mX^2-(1-m)X^2=(2m-1)X^2$$

so that the output signal from the adder **19** can be expressed as

$$X+(2m-1)X^2.$$

Hence, the input-output characteristic of the variable correction circuit **10** is changed according to the value of m in accordance with the detected average picture level. However, in order to maintain the brightness range of the output video signal S_O as a constant, a peak automatic gain control circuit **30** is coupled from the output of the adder **19** back to a point in advance of the variable correcting circuit **10**.

It should be noted that in this embodiment if the value of m is selected as ¼, the variable correction circuit **10** will have a gamma approximately ½, if the value of m is selected as ½, the gamma will be unity, and if the value of m is selected as 1, the gamma will be 2.

FIG. **9** illustrates a three-tube type color television camera incorporating a correction circuit according to the present invention. In this camera, an optical system

40 separates the image into red, green, and blue images which are incident on respective red, green, and blue image pickup tubes 50R, 50G, and 50B. As a result, the latter provide respective red, green, and blue color signals. These color signals are provided to a matrix circuit 60 which then derives from them a luminance signal and supplies the same to the APL detector 20. In this embodiment, respective variable correction circuits 10R, 10G, and 10B are provided to control the brightness of the corresponding red, green, and blue color signals. The control signal from the APL detector 20 is provided to each of the vertical correction circuits 10R, 10G, and 10B to control their respective input-output characteristics. Then, the corrected red, green, and blue color signals from the circuits 10R, 10G, and 10B are supplied through respective γ-correction circuits 70R, 70G, and 70B to an NTSC encoder 80, and the latter provides an encoded composite color video signal at an output terminal 90 thereof.

If instead of a plural-tube camera, a single-tube type color camera is employed, in which the luminance signal is separated, the average picture level of the luminance signal can be detected without the necessity of employing the matrix circuit 60.

A television receiver incorporating a correction circuit according to this invention is illustrated in FIG. 10. In this receiver, a composite color video signal applied to an input terminal 100 thereof is separated in a filter circuit 110 into a luminance component Y and a chrominance component C. The luminance component Y is furnished through a luminance signal processing circuit 120 to a matrix circuit 130, and is also furnished to the APL detector 20. The chrominance component C is furnished to color demodulator 140 which then supplies a pair of color difference signals to the matrix circuit 130. The latter then provides primary color signals R, G, and B to a color cathode ray tube 150. In this receiver, respective variable correction circuits 10R, 10G, and 10B are provided between the matrix circuit 130 and respective cathodes 150R, 150G, and 150B of the color cathode ray tube 150. Here, the separated red, green, and blue color signals are adjusted in brightness according to the average luminance level detected by the APL detector 20.

Another embodiment of this invention is illustrated in FIG. 11, in which the luminance component and the chrominance component are not separated, as they are in the embodiment of FIG. 10. In this embodiment, the composite color video signal is applied from the input terminal 100 to a clamp circuit 210 and thence to the variable correction circuit 10. The composite color video signal is also supplied to a subcarrier trap circuit 220, which blocks the chrominance component modulated on the subcarrier, so that only the luminance signal and the synchronizing pulse are passed. The synchronizing pulse is separated out therefrom in a synch separator 230 and is furnished to the clamp circuit 210 so that the latter can clamp the video signal to the pedestal level of the synchronizing pulse. The luminance component is furnished from the subcarrier trap 220 through a synch signal slice circuit 240 to the APL detector 20. A corrected composite color video signal is then applied from the variable correction circuit 10 to an output terminal 250. In this embodiment, the variable correction circuit 10 has an input-output characteristic that varies as a function of the control signal from the APL detector 20 during the line scanning portion of the video signal, but has a linear input-output characteristic

($\gamma=1$) during the occurrence of the synchronizing pulse.

Another embodiment of the correction circuit of this invention is illustrated in FIG. 12. It should be appreciated that the embodiment of FIG. 12 is a variation of the embodiment of FIG. 11. In this embodiment, the luminance and chrominance components are not separated from one another, but the synchronizing pulse is separated out and is treated separately. Here, a video separator 260 is coupled to the input terminal 100 so that only the luminance and chrominance components are furnished to the clamp circuit 210. The synch separator 230 is coupled in advance of the video separator 260, and the separated synchronizing pulse is furnished therefrom to the clamp circuit 210 and also to an adder circuit 270 disposed after the variable correction circuit 10. The composite color video signal, without the synchronizing pulse, is applied to the clamp circuit 210 where it is clamped to the pedestal level of the synchronizing pulse from the synch separator 230, and the thus-clamped color video signal is supplied to the variable correction circuit 10. The clamped color video signal is also supplied through the subcarrier trap circuit 220 to the APL detector 20 which detects the average picture level of the luminance component. The APL detector 20 then furnishes a control signal to the variable correction circuit 10 to control its input-output characteristic. Then, the corrected color video signal from the variable correcting circuit 10 is combined in the adder circuit 270 with the separated synchronizing pulse, so that a finally corrected composite color video signal is provided at the output terminal 250.

Yet another video receiver incorporating the correction circuit according to this invention is illustrated in FIG. 13. This video receiver combines the features of this invention with a circuit for dynamically controlling the amplitude of the video signal according to the picture contents, i.e., a so-called dynamic picture control circuit. Examples of such a dynamic picture control circuit are disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 4,403,254, issued Sept. 6, 1983, and U.S. Pat. No. 4,298,885, issued Nov. 3, 1981, both of which have a common assignee herewith.

As illustrated in FIG. 13, the separated luminance signal is furnished from the filter 110 to a luminance gain control circuit 170Y and is then furnished to a luminance correction circuit 10Y. The latter is formed in general like the embodiment of FIG. 8, and includes a squaring circuit 12Y, a gain control circuit 13Y, and an adder circuit 19Y. A corrected luminance signal is furnished from the adder circuit 19Y through a luminance processing circuit 120 to the matrix circuit 130. The luminance component Y is also furnished from the gain control circuit 170Y to the APL detector 20 which then detects the average luminance component. The chrominance component C is furnished through an automatic chroma control (ACC) circuit 160 to a chrominance gain control circuit 170C, and thence to a chrominance correcting circuit 10C. This circuit 10C is basically similar to circuit 10Y and to the embodiment of FIG. 8, and includes a squaring circuit 12C, a gain control circuit 13C, and an adder circuit 19C. The corrected chrominance signal is then furnished from the adder circuit 19C to the color demodulator 140 which provides demodulated color difference signals to the matrix circuit 130.

The matrix circuit 130 provides decoded primary color signals R, G, and B to the cathodes 150R, 150G,

and 150B and also to a minimum value detecting circuit 180, which here includes diodes having their cathodes connected to the cathodes 150R, 150G, and 150B of the cathode ray tube 150 and having their anodes connected to a peak detecting circuit 190. The output of the peak detecting circuit 190 then controls the gain of the gain control circuits 170Y and 170C.

In this embodiment, the control signal from the APL detector 20 is furnished to both the gain control circuit 13Y and the gain control circuit 13C of the respective luminance and chrominance variable correcting circuits 10Y and 10C.

In each of the above embodiments of this invention, the brightness of a video signal is automatically controlled according to the information carried within the video signal, thereby providing an optimum contrast ratio to that portion of the video picture having the greatest amount of information. As a result, according to this invention, it is possible to provide a reproduced picture which is natural and pleasing to the eye, and which has sufficient contrast so that the picture is neither harsh nor washed out.

Although certain preferred embodiments of this invention have been described in detail herein with reference to the accompanying drawings, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited to those precise embodiments, and that various changes and modifications may be effected therein by persons skilled in the art without departing from the scope or spirit of the invention as defined in the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A control circuit for controlling the brightness of a video signal that fluctuates between a peak dark level and a peak bright level about an average brightness level comprising:

brightness controlling means having a signal input to which the video signal is applied as an input video signal and a signal output from which an output video signal is provided, said brightness controlling means being operable by a control signal for controlling the brightness of the video signal so that respective portions of said output video signal corresponding to portions of the input video signal at said peak dark level and at said peak bright level are provided substantially at said peak dark and bright levels while the average picture level of said output video signal is provided at a predetermined optimum level;

average picture level detecting means for detecting the average brightness level of at least one of said input and output video signals and providing said control signal in response to the detected average brightness level; and

a variable gamma correction circuit included in said brightness controlling means and having an input-output characteristic such that for the input video signal having a level proportional to a value X, where X is in the range $0 \leqq X \leqq 1$, said video signal is provided at a level proportional to a value X^{γ}; and the value of γ is automatically determined in response to the control signal from said average picture level detecting means.

2. A control circuit according to claim 1; wherein said average picture level detecting means is connected to receive said input video signal in advance of said brightness controlling means to provide said control signal as a function of the average brightness level of said input video signal.

3. A control circuit according to claim 1; wherein said average picture level detecting means is connected to receive said output video signal from said brightness controlling means to provide said control signal as a function of the average brightness level of said output video signal.

4. A correction circuit according to claim 1; wherein said variable gamma correction circuit includes means for selecting the value of γ to be a number whose magnitude is less than unity when said average brightness level is detected to be less than said predetermined optimum level, to be unity when said average picture level is detected to be substantially at said predetermined optimum level, and to be a number greater than unity when said average brightness level is detected to be greater than said predetermined optimum level.

5. A control circuit according to claim 4; wherein the value of γ is selected to be $\frac{1}{2}$ and 2, respectively when said average brightness level is detected to be less than and greater than said predetermined optimum level.

6. A control circuit for controlling the brightness of a video signal that fluctuates between a peak dark level and a peak bright level about an average brightness level comprising:

brightness controlling means having a signal input to which the video signal is applied as an input video signal having a level proportional to a value X, where X is in the range $0 \leqq X \leqq 1$, and a signal output from which an output video signal is provided, said brightness controlling means being operable by a control signal for controlling the brightness of the video signal so that respective portions of said output video signal corresponding to portions of the input video signal at said peak dark level and at said peak bright level are provided substantially at said peak dark and bright levels while the average picture level of said output video signal is provided at a predetermined optimum level; said brightness controlling means including first correction circuit means having an input-output characteristic such that a first corrected video signal is provided at a level proportional to $\sqrt{X}$, second correction circuit means having an input-output characteristic such that a second corrected video signal is provided at a level proportional to X^2 and summing circuit means for combining said first and second corrected video signals in relative amounts depending upon said control signal so that the combined first and second corrected video signals are provided as said output video signal; and

average picture level detecting means for detecting the average brightness level of said input video signal and providing said control signal in response to the detected average brightness level.

7. A control circuit according to claim 6; wherein said first correction circuit means includes a constant current source, an input transistor having an input electrode coupled to receive said input video signal and an output electrode coupled to said constant current source, an auxiliary transistor having a control electrode coupled with the output electrode of the input transistor and current carrying electrodes respectively coupled to the control electrode of the input transistor and to a reference point; and an output transistor having a control electrode coupled to the control electrode of said input transistor and an output electrode providing said first corrected video signal.

8. A control circuit according to claim 7; wherein said first correction circuit means further includes a diode coupled in advance of the control electrode of said input transistor; and wherein said second correction circuit means includes a constant current source, an input transistor having a control electrode coupled to receive said input video signal and an output electrode, a diode having one electrode coupled to the output electrode of the input transistor and another electrode coupled to said constant current source, and an output transistor having a control electrode coupled to said other electrode of said diode and an output electrode providing said second corrected video signal.

9. A control circuit according to claim 6; wherein said summing circuit means includes a load impedance; a voltage source; a first transistor having a control electrode coupled to receive said control signal, one current-carrying electrode coupled to said voltage source, and another current-carrying electrode coupled to receive said first corrected video signal; a second transistor having a control electrode, an input electrode coupled to said another current-carrying electrode of said first transistor, and an output electrode coupled to said load impedance; a third transistor having a control electrode, one current-carrying electrode coupled to said voltage source and another current-carrying electrode coupled to receive said second corrected video signal; means biasing the control electrodes of said second and third transistors to a predetermined level; a fourth transistor having a control electrode coupled to receive said control signal, an input electrode coupled to said other current carrying electrode of said third transistor, and an output electrode coupled to said load impedance; and output means coupled to said output impedance to provide said output video signal.

10. A control circuit for controlling the brightness of a video signal that fluctuates between a peak dark level and a peak bright level about an average brightness level comprising:

brightness controlling means having a signal input to which the video signal is applied as an input video signal and a signal output from which an output video signal is provided, said brightness controlling means being operable by a control signal for controlling the brightness of the video signal so that respective portions of said output video signal corresponding to portions of the input video signal at said peak dark level and at said peak bright level are provided substantially at said peak dark and bright levels while the average picture level of said output video signal is provided at a predetermined optimum level; said brightness controlling means including correction circuit means having an input terminal to which said input video signal is applied and an output terminal at which a corrected video signal is obtained, the latter being substantially proportional to the square of the input video signal, polarity inverter means coupled to the output terminal of the correction circuit means for providing an inverted version of said corrected video signal, summing circuit means for combining said corrected video signal and the inverted version thereof in relative amounts depending upon said control signal to provide a resultant video signal and adder means for combining the input video signal with said resultant video signal to produce said output video signal; and

average picture level detecting means for detecting the average brightness level of said input video signal and providing said control signal in response to the detected average brightness level.

11. A control circuit according to claim 10; further comprising peak automatic gain control circuit means for controlling the strength of the input video signal in response to at least one peak value of said output video signal.

12. A color television camera providing a composite color video signal comprising a plurality of pickup tubes each responsive to light of a respective primary color to produce a corresponding primary-color signal that fluctuates between a peak dark level and a peak bright level about an average brightness level; average picture level detecting means for detecting the average brightness level of the composite color video signal and providing a control signal in response to such detected average brightness level; a plurality of variable correction circuits each coupled to a respective pickup tube for processing a respective primary color signal, each such variable correction circuit being coupled to receive said control signal and having an input-output characteristic such that for the associated respective primary-color signal having a level proportional to a value X, where X is in range $0 \leqq X \leqq 1$, said variable correction circuit provides an output signal substantially proportional to a value X^γ, where the value γ is automatically determined in response to the control signal from the average picture level detecting means; and encoding means coupled to receive the output signals from said variable correction circuits for providing said composite color video signal as a brightness-corrected composite color video signal.

13. A color television camera according to claim 12; wherein said composite color video signal includes a luminance component; and said average picture level detecting means includes a matrix circuit having inputs coupled to said plurality of pickup tubes and an output providing said luminance component, and also includes average luminance level detecting means coupled to said matrix circuit and responsive to said luminance component for providing said control signal.

14. A control circuit for controlling the brightness of a video signal in a color television display apparatus having a color display tube providing a color video picture in response to a plurality of primary color signals, and in which a chrominance signal and a luminance signal that varies between a black level and a peak white level about an average brightness level are combined to form said plurality of primary color signals, comprising

average picture level detecting means coupled to receive the luminance signal for detecting the average brightness level of said luminance signal and providing a control signal in response to the detected average brightness level; and a plurality of variable correction circuits each operative upon a respective primary color signal and disposed in advance of said color display tube, each such variable correction circuit being coupled to receive said control signal and having an input-output characteristic such that for the associated respective primary-color signal having a level proportional to a value X, where X is in the range $0 \leqq X \leqq 1$, said variable correction circuit provides to the associated respective beam-generating device, an output signal that is substantially propor-

tional to a value X^{γ}, where the value of γ is automatically determined in response to said control signal.

15. A correction circuit for controlling the brightness of a composite color video signal having a luminance component that fluctuates between a black level and a peak white level about an average luminance level, a chrominance component, and a synchronizing pulse with a pedestal portion, comprising clamping means for establishing the black level of said video signal as a function of said pedestal portion; means for providing said synchronizing pulse to said clamping means; average picture level detecting means for providing a control signal in response to the average luminance level of said luminance component; and brightness controlling means coupled to receive said control signal and having a signal input to which at least said luminance and chrominance components are applied and a signal output from which an output composite video signal is obtained, for controlling the brightness of the composite video signal so that respective portions of said output composite video signal corresponding to portions of the luminance component at said black level and at said peak white level are provided substantially at said black and peak white levels, while said output composite video signal has an average picture level that is provided at a predetermined optimum level.

16. A correction circuit according to claim **15**; wherein said brightness controlling means has an input-output characteristic that varies as a function of said control signal between occurrences of said synchronizing pulse but has a constant input-output charcteristic during occurrence of said synchronizing pulse.

17. A correction circuit according to claim **16**; further comprising synch signal slicing means in advance of said average picture level detecting means for blocking said synchronizing pulse.

18. A correction circuit according to claim **15**; further comprising separating means in advance of said clamping means for passing thereto said composite color video signal without said synchronizing pulse, said means for providing said synchronizing pulse having an input coupled in advance of said separating means; and wherein said brightness controlling means includes means for controlling the brightness of the clamped luminance and chrominance components to provide a corrected signal and adder means for combining the corrected signal with the synchronizing pulse to produce said output composite video signal.

19. A color video display apparatus to which is applied a composite color video signal including a chrominance component and a luminance component that fluctuates between a black level and a peak white level

about an average brightness level comprising separating means for separating said luminance component and said chrominance component from said composite color video signal; average picture level detecting means having an input coupled to receive the separated luminance component for providing a control signal in response to the detected average brightness level; variable luminance component controlling circuit means having an input to receive the separated luminance component, a signal output from which a corrected luminance component is provided, and a control input to receive said control signal, for controlling the brightness of the separated luminance component so that respective portions of the corrected luminance component corresponding to portions of the separated luminance component at said black and peak white levels are provided substantially at said black and peak white levels, while the average brightness level of said corrected luminance component is provided substantially at a predetermined optimum level; variable chrominance component controlling circuit means having an input to receive the separated chrominance component, a signal output from which a corrected chrominance component is provided, and a control input to receive said control signal, for controlling the strength of the separated chrominance component, and having an input-output characteristic that varies as a function of said control signal; processing circuit means to which said corrected luminance and chrominance components are applied for producing a plurality color signals; and display means for producing a picture in response to said primary color signals.

20. A color video display apparatus according to claim **19**; further comprising minimum value detecting means for detecting the minimum among the levels of said plurality of primary color signals; peak detecting means for detecting the peak value of such detected minimum level and providing a gain control signal in response thereto; luminance gain control means interposed between said separating means and said variable luminance component controlling circuit means for controlling the strength of said separated luminance component in dependence on said gain control signal; and chrominance gain control means interposed between said separating means and said variable chrominance component controlling means for controlling the strength of said separated chrominance component in dependence on said gain control signal.

21. A color video display apparatus according to claim **20**; further comprising an automatic chroma control circuit interposed between said separating means and said chrominance gain control means.

* * * * *

Exhibit E

CL 26-C 4,041 11-3-88

DP 262

DEC 1988

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Roland
12-28-88

7464

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Application of W. Song et al.) Group Art Unit 262
Serial No. 182,987) Examiner: E. Faris
Filed: April 18, 1988)
For: A SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR)
ELECTRONIC IMAGE)
ENHANCEMENT BY DYNAMIC)
PIXEL TRANSFORMATION)

Cambridge, Massachusetts
December 8, 1988

To the Commissioner of Patents
and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 20231

AMENDMENT

Sir:

In response to the Office Actions of October 14, and October 20, 1988, Applicants amend the above-entitled application as follows:

In the Claims:

Please amend claim 1 as follows:

A1 cont

1. (Amended) A system for continuously enhancing electronic image data received in a continuous stream of electronic information signals, each signal having a value within a determinate dynamic range of values and corresponding to one of a plurality of succeeding pixels which collectively define an image, said system comprising:

15

Serial No. 182,987

means for averaging electronic information signals corresponding to selected pluralities of pixels and providing an average electronic information signal for each said plurality of pixels so averaged; and

means for selecting one of a plurality of different transfer functions for the electronic information signal for each of the succeeding pixels in a manner whereby each transfer function is selected as a function of the electronic information signal for one pixel and the average electronic information signal for the select plurality of pixels containing said one pixel and for subsequently transforming the electronic information signal corresponding to each pixel by the transfer function selected for that pixel <u>wherein said selecting and transforming means further operates to select said transfer function as a function of the ratio of the value of the average electronic information signal to the dynamic range of the electronic information signals such that the ratio increases in correspondence with the increase in the value of the average electronic information signal</u>.

H1 conch

NP NI

Claim 2, line 2, change "includes means" to --is--.

Claim 2, line 8, after "and" insert --is--.

Cancel claim 3.

Serial No. 182,987

Claim 4, line 1, change "claim 3" to --claim 2--.

Please amend claim 7 as follows:

6 ~~7~~. (Amended) A system for enhancing electronic image data received in a continuous stream of electronic information signals each signal having a value within a determinate dynamic range of values and corresponding to one of a plurality of succeeding pixels which collectively define an image, said system comprising:

A2 cont

means for averaging electronic information signals corresponding to selected pluralities of pixels and providing an average electronic information signal for each said plurality of pixels so averaged;

means for dividing each of the average electronic information signals corresponding to each pixel by a value M corresponding to a select proportionate value of the dynamic range of said electronic information signals;

first means for subtracting 1 from each of the electronic information signals output by said dividing means;

first means for adding a select control parameter and 1;

first means for determining the logarithm of the output from said first adding means;

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first means for multiplying the output from said first logarithm determining means by the output from said first subtracting means;

first means for determining the antilogarithm of the output from said first multiplying means;

second means for determining the logarithm for each of the continuous streams of electronic information signals;

A2 cont

second means for subtracting the logarithm for a value corresponding to the maximum value of the electronic information signals from the output of said second logarithm determining means;

second means for multiplying the output of said first antilogarithm determining means by the output from said second subtracting means;

second means for adding the logarithm of the value corresponding to the maximum value of the electronic information signals to the output from said second multiplying means; and

second means for determining the antilogarithm of the output from said second adding means to provide an enhanced output signal value.

Please amend claim 8 as follows:

7 ~~8~~. (Amended) A method for continuously enhancing electronic image data received in a continuous stream of electronic information signals each signal having a

Serial No. 182,987

value within a determinate dynamic range of values and corresponding to one of a plurality of succeeding pixels which collectively define an image, said method comprising the steps of:

averaging the electronic information signals corresponding to selected pluralities of pixels and providing an average electronic information signal for each said plurality of pixels;

A2 concl

selecting one of a plurality of different transfer functions for the electronic information signal for each of the plurality of succeeding pixels in a manner whereby each transfer function is selected as a function of the electronic information signal for one pixel and the average electronic information signal for the select plurality of pixels containing said one pixel; and

transforming the electronic information signal corresponding to each pixel by the transfer function selected for that pixel wherein said transfer function is selected further as a function of the ratio of the value of the average electronic information signal to a select proportionate value of the dynamic range of the electronic information signals such that the ratio increases in correspondence with the increase in the value of the average electronic information signal.

Cancel claim 10.

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Claim 11, line 1, change "claim 10" to --claim 9--.

REMARKS

The Examiner rejected claims 3 - 7 and 10 - 15 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. Claims 1, 2, 8 and 9 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Okada. In response to these rejections, Applicants have amended claims 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 10 and 11 and cancelled claims 3 and 10.

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate all the limitations of dependent claim 3 which the Examiner indicated to be allowable. The recitations of claim 2 do not include any antecedents required by claim 3 and hence have not been included in the amended claim 1. Likewise, claim 8 has been amended to include all the limitations of dependent claim 10 which the Examiner also indicated to be allowable. The recitations of claim 9 also do not include any antecedents required by claim 8 and hence have not been included in the amended claim 8. Claims 1, 7 and 8 have also been amended to recite that the signals have values within a determinate dynamic range thereby obviating the Examiner's rejections based on lack of antecedent

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basis for these terms. It is respectfully urged that the remainder of the rejections based on lack of antecedents are inappropriate.

Therefore, in the absence of more pertinent art, it is requested that claims 1, 2, 4 - 8, 9 and 11 - 15 be allowed and the subject application passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

Edward S. Roman

Edward S. Roman
Registration No. 25,778

617-577-2518

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited today with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, D.C. 20231.

Name: Edward S. Roman
Registration No. 25,778
Date: December 8, 1988

EXHIBIT F

UNITED STATE' PARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Patent and Trad. rk Office
Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS
Washington, D.C. 20231

SERIAL NUMBER	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED APPLICANT	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.
07/182,962	04/18/88	BONC H	7464

POLAROID CORPORATION
PATENT DEPARTMENT
549 TECHNOLOGY SQ.
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

EXAMINER	
FARUS,E	
ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
262	7

DATE MAILED: 01/04/89

NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY

PART I.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to amendment A filed on December 12, 1988.
2. ☒ All the claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice Of Allowance And Issue Fee Due or other appropriate communication will be sent in due course.
3. ☒ The allowed claims are 1, 2, 4-9, 11-15 renumbered as 1-13.
4. ☒ The drawings filed on 4/18/88 are acceptable.
5. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of the claim for priority under 35 U.S.C. 119. The certified copy has [_] been received. [_] not been received. [_] been filed in parent application Serial No. ________, filed on ________.
6. ☐ Note the attached Examiner's Amendment.
7. ☐ Note the attached Examiner Interview Summary Record, PTOL-413.
8. ☐ Note the attached Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance.
9. ☐ Note the attached NOTICE OF REFERENCES CITED, PTO-892.
10. ☐ Note the attached INFORMATION DISCLOSURE CITATION, PTO-1449.

PART II.

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR RESPONSE to comply with the requirements noted below is set to EXPIRE THREE MONTHS FROM THE "DATE MAILED" indicated on this form. Failure to timely comply will result in the ABANDONMENT of this application. Extensions of time may be obtained under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a).

1. ☐ Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL APPLICATION, PTO-152, which discloses that the oath or declaration is deficient. A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION IS REQUIRED.
2. ☐ APPLICANT MUST MAKE THE DRAWING CHANGES INDICATED BELOW IN THE MANNER SET FORTH ON THE REVERSE SIDE OF THIS PAPER.
   a. ☐ Drawing informalities are indicated on the NOTICE RE PATENT DRAWINGS, PTO-948, attached hereto or to Paper No. ________. CORRECTION IS REQUIRED.
   b. ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ________ has been approved by the examiner. CORRECTION IS REQUIRED.
   c. ☐ Approved drawing corrections are described by the examiner in the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT. CORRECTION IS REQUIRED.
   d. ☐ Formal drawings are now REQUIRED.

Any response to this letter should include in the upper right hand corner, the following information from the NOTICE OF ALLOWANCE AND ISSUE FEE DUE: ISSUE BATCH NUMBER, DATE OF THE NOTICE OF ALLOWANCE, AND SERIAL NUMBER.

Attachments:
- Examiner's Amendment
- Examiner Interview Summary Record, PTOL-413
- Reasons for Allowance
- Notice of References Cited, PTO-892
- Information Disclosure Citation, PTO-1449
- Notice of Informal Application, PTO-152
- Notice re Patent Drawings, PTO-948
- Listing of Bonded Draftsmen
- Other

J Grody
James J. Groody
Supervisory . Examiner
Art Unit 262

PTOL-37 (REV. 2-85) USCOMM-DC 85-3744

Exhibit G

REDACTED
IN ITS ENTIRETY

Exhibit H

REDACTED
IN ITS ENTIRETY